MR.
RUTHERFORD'S
CHILDREN
WETHERELL

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MR. RUTHERFORD'S CHILDREN.

SECOND SERIES.

BY THE AUTHORS OF

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Sixth Thousand.

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MR. RUTHERFORD'S CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

WINTER QUARTERS.

In one of the streets of the great city there may yet be seen a large hotel, which was an old building when Chryssa was a little child. It was built of grey stone, and had chimneys enough for a whole row of houses, and as many windows as if it meant to take in all the sunbeams for its own use. But the sunbeams did not choose to go. They liked better to dance on the weathercocks of the tall church steeples, and to run up and down the sides of the houses, and to lie on the pavement. They never even glanced upon some of the hotel windows, and at others there were blinds and thick curtains that it was too much trouble to get past; and there were still others where the sunbeams really went in but did not stay,—there was no "trap to catch" them.

There was, however, one large room in the hotel upon which the sun looked with particular approbation; and this room Mr. Rutherford had chosen for a winter parlour. A thick brown carpet covered the floor, and the curtains were brown, and the chair covers,—not a dull dingy colour, but the sort of

brown glow that the sun gives to a ripe butternut. The cloth upon the table was red.

Next to this room were two neat bedrooms which opened into each other, and this was the whole establishment, except a little room for Janet somewhere.

For some time the brown parlour had been quite shut up; but one morning early in December, though it was late enough in the morning, the shutters were opened and the fire was made; and then Timon—who was the man in charge of that part of the house—went and looked out of the window. Presently the fire roared out to him to come and take the blower off; and when Timon had carefully turned the rug wrong side up, he went away and locked the door after him.

The coal blazed on by itself then, and the curtains brightened up and looked quite sociable, and even went so far as to cast reflections upon the carpet because it lay there on the floor. But the carpet knew his place, and kept it; neither did one of the chairs move a foot. Then the sun came in and said that everything looked very pleasant; and the little motes swam about in the warm light, and looked perfectly happy.

At that very time Mr. Rutherford's barouche was coming from Rose Hill after Cherry and Dash, as fast as it could; and on the back seat sat Chryssa and Sybil, muffled up in all sorts of cloaks and wrappers, for it was very cold. Janet was in the barouche too, but Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford meant to stay at Rose Hill until the afternoon.

"I'm glad we're going to town," said Chryssa, "and I'm sorry too."

"I'm not," said Sybil. "I'm all glad."

"I didn't like to leave the cats," said Chryssa, looking out of the barouche with a sober face.

"O they'll do well enough," said Sybil, "and we

shall do a great deal better. I mean to see a great many things."

"What things?" said Chryssa.

"O I don't know," said Sybil,—"all sorts of things. There's the wild beasts—and the glass-blower."

"Well, what *are* wild beasts?" said Chryssa, knitting her brows. "Mrs. Delue said Theodore was as wild as a hawk."

"But that isn't the kind of wild I mean," said Sybil,—"I mean *real* wild beasts—that people put in a Menagerie."

"What is a Menagerie?" said Chryssa.

"Why the place where they keep wild beasts," said Sybil.

"I don't know what wild beasts are yet," said Chryssa.

"O dear," said Sybil—"well, you can't expect to know everything yet, so you may as well begin by being contented. I mean lions, and tigers, and elephants, and bears, and wolves, and panthers."

"I saw a picture of a wild boar once," said Chryssa.

"They don't keep them in menageries," said Sybil,—"they're too like pigs."

"Will Uncle Ruth take me with you to the Menagerie?" said Chryssa.

"No, I think not," said Sybil,—"you would be frightened to death, and think the lion was going to eat you up."

Chryssa looked grave, as if she thought that quite possible; but by this time the carriage was rattling over the pavement, and made such a noise that nobody could hear anything else. The children were silent, but Sybil's eyes roamed earnestly about, while Chryssa's thoughtful face, as she sat back in the carriage, left it doubtful which member of the cat tribe occupied her attention. At last the carriage stopped at the door of the hotel, and the children

got out and went quietly after Janet to the brown parlour.

"O they've got the fire made!" said Sybil—"how good that is! But what a funny brown room! I wonder why Uncle Ruth had not blue curtains—or red—or orange colour."

"I like the brown curtains," said Chryssa, who was warming her hands at the fire; "and the carpet too. It looks so comfortable."

"Well, I suppose it is comfortable, but it isn't pretty," said Sybil, as she went round the room and looked at everything. "It will be better when Aunt Esther's work-table comes, and the books, they'll look like something. O Chryssa, we shall have dinner here to-day, all by ourselves—Aunt Esther said we might. And we can have just what we like, too. Now you take off your things, and then we'll sit down by the fire and talk, and I'll tell you all I'm going to do."

Chryssa's ideas of things pleasant to do were held in check by the brick walls and noisy pavement, and by the total absence of cats and flowers; but she took off her coat and hat and her little worked moccasins, after which her feet were so cold that she wished she had them on again. So she drew along a brown chair and sat down by the fire to try what that would do. But the chair was so high that Chryssa could not touch even her toes to the floor, and with a little sigh she said,

"O dear!—I wish we had our little benches. My feet hang down."

"Why don't you stick them out then?" said Sybil.

"Because it tires me," said Chryssa. "But I can curl them up, and sit like a Turk."

"There's somebody at the door," said Sybil, jumping down from her brown chair, and running to open it.

A man stood there with a paper in his hand.

"What does Mr. Rutherford want for dinner?" said he.

"Mr. Rutherford isn't here," said Sybil,—"he hasn't come yet. He'll be here to tea."

"Somebody in No. 20 wants dinner," said the man, looking at his paper.

"Is our room No. 20?" said Sybil, running out into the hall to look up at the door. "O yes, so it is. Yes, we want dinner."

"How many?" said the man, taking out his pencil.

"Two," said Sybil.

"There's Janet," whispered Chryssa, who had come down from being a Turk.

"Hush!" whispered Sybil, "she'll dine down stairs with the servants. There's only two."

"What will you have?" said the man. "Here's the bill of fare."

Now Sybil did not know in the least what the bill of fare was; but she took the long paper, which was covered with writing, and tried what she could make of it.

'Roast chicken' was plain enough, and so was 'boiled turkey;' but then followed 'larded partridges,' and 'chickens sautés,' and 'fricandeau de veau.' Sybil drew Chryssa to the fireplace.

"What shall we have?" she said.

"I don't care," said Chryssa,—"beefsteak is very good."

"But we have that at home," said Sybil. "Let us have chickens done in this way—I don't know how it is."

"Perhaps you might not like them," said Chryssa.

"O everything here is good, I suppose," said Sybil, "only I don't know what they mean by this word. I think I'll tell him chicken, and then he can bring whichever he likes. You can have some beefsteak too, if you want, Chryssa."

"O I like chickens very much, if they're good," said Chryssa. "What are you going to have besides?"

"I forgot all about that," said Sybil—"here it is, over on the other side. I think we'll have some pumpkin pie, Chryssa."

"But I like custard a great deal better," said Chryssa.

"Well, you can have it then. We'll have some chicken, if you please," she said to the man,—"and some pumpkin pie, and custard."

The waiter smiled, and taking the paper, he went out again and shut the door.

"Now Chryssa," said Sybil, "let us put away our things, and then we shall be quite ready for dinner."

"I think we'd better brush our hair too," said Chryssa, "for yours is just as rough as can be. But we haven't any things to put away yet."

"O yes we have," said Sybil. "There are our coats and hats, and our gloves; and we can take our nightgowns out of the little bag, and lay them on the bed to be ready."

So they went into the little room which Janet said was theirs, and having with some difficulty unlocked the little bag, proceeded to unpack it. A hairbrush appeared first, and then a night-gown.

"That's mine," said Sybil,—"now where's yours, I wonder?" But Chryssa's nightgown was not forthcoming.

"But I brought it to you!" said Chryssa, "don't you remember? and laid it on the chair by the window. I know I did, because I told Aunt Esther it was there, and she said you wanted to pack the bag."

"Yes, and so I did," said Sybil, "but it seems I didn't put in your night-gown. If Aunt Esther don't get here before we go to bed, Chryssa, you'll have to sleep in a petticoat. I'll lend you one of mine that

will come up round your neck; and I'll tie up your head beautifully in a pocket-handkerchief."

"Well that would be very nice," said Chryssa. "Just as good as a nightgown, wouldn't it?"

"No, not just as good, but it would do. And now if you'll fold up your coat and put it in one drawer of the bureau, I'll fold up mine and put in another; and then they'll be out of the way. I think you had better take the lowest drawer because you can reach it easily."

The coats were folded and put away, and the heads were brushed, and then the children returned to their brown chairs by the parlour fire.

"I wish dinner was ready," said Chryssa, "I'm very hungry."

"O we sha'n't have dinner this great while yet, I suppose," said Sybil.

"Well tell me a story then, will you?" said Chryssa.

"What would you like to hear?" said Sybil.

"O I don't know," said Chryssa. "Anything."

"Well then I'll tell you about—about a hungry squirrel. There was once a squirrel in the very top of a sugar-maple tree."

"Was he a striped squirrel?" said Chryssa.

"No, I think he was a grey one, with a long bushy tail, and eyes as bright as fire-flies."

"But what was he doing on the top of the tree?" said Chryssa. "Because his nest must have been down in some hole."

"Of course," said Sybil, "but he went up there to look about. Do you suppose squirrels never want to know what's going on in the world? You see they work and work in some hole for ever so long, and then they take a little journey for pleasure, up to the top of a tree. There wasn't much to be seen that day, however; only an old woman going to market with a load of turnips, and a cornfield full of

pumpkins, and two chickens fighting in the barn-yard."

"What were they fighting about?" said Chryssa.

"O about their dinner," said Sybil. "One of them had found a little caterpillar, and the other wanted it. So there wasn't much for the squirrel to see; but the sky was very blue, and the cornfields looked very yellow, and the squirrel thought he would go and try the corn some day. And after he had stayed up there a good while he began to feel hungry, which was very natural; but there wasn't a thing for him to eat nearer than the cornfield, and that was two miles off."

"Why didn't he get some nuts?" said Chryssa.

"Because he was up in a maple tree. And the next tree was a maple, and the next was a chestnut, but there hadn't been any frost to open the skins. So the squirrel ran down to the ground and looked about, but he didn't see his dinner anywhere; so he thought to himself that he might as well take a walk and look after it. When he had passed quite a number of trees he came to an oak, and on the oak there were beautiful little green acorns in brown cups; but the squirrel thought they were not good enough for him, so he went on. By-and-by he came to the road, but there he had a great many frights, and wished himself back in the woods again; for whenever a waggon came along, he had to run and hide under the fence, and if there was a big dog behind the waggon the squirrel felt sure he should be found out. At last he saw a little long green thing lying just in the middle of the road; and with a hop skip and jump the squirrel went up to it, and found that it was a beautiful ear of green corn. So then he had a fine dinner and something for supper besides. Why Chryssa! what are you about?"

For Chryssa had got as tired with the squirrel's long walk as he must have been himself; and now

her head went nodding forward, and she almost fell into the fire.

"I think you had better go to sleep if you can't keep awake," said Sybil; and Chryssa did manage to get off her brown chair, and upon the brown sofa, and there she slept till the table was set, and the dinner ready.

It was a very fine dinner, the children thought,—probably because they had ordered it and had to eat it by themselves; and as the waiter had brought even more than they asked for, there really was a good deal for two such little people.

The chicken was there, as large as life—or nearly so, for the feathers made some difference; and a wee little beefsteak, and vegetables. And then, for second course, there was not only a whole pumpkin pie and three custards, but also two little plates of ice-cream, and a dish with some mottoes and lady-apples. The children thought they had never enjoyed any dinner so much; and Timon, that was the waiter, took as good care of them as possible.

After dinner they told stories again for a while, and then sat still by the fire, feeling very tired and sleepy, till tea-time. And soon after tea they went to bed. Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford had not yet arrived, but Janet was there to do anything for them; only for a while she couldn't do much but laugh at Chryssa's new-fashioned night-gown and cap. Sybil had made her put on one of her own petticoats, which being much too long made Chryssa look like a little old woman; and then for fear she should take cold from sleeping with a bare neck, Sybil folded a clean handkerchief and pinned it close round her throat. Another handkerchief must do duty as a night-cap, but it was hard to make it stay on. Sybil folded and twisted and pinned; and sometimes Chryssa cried out, "O you are twisting my hair all up!" and sometimes she gave her head a

little shake, and away went the new cap upon the floor.

"I'll tell you what, Chryssa," said Sybil, "you must get into bed and then I'll put it on ; and if you lie down very carefully, I think it will stay."

Chryssa got into bed therefore, and then Sybil knelt down on the counterpane and tied the handkerchief on once more, and Chryssa lay down very carefully. But she forgot to be careful after she went to sleep ; and when Mrs. Rutherford came, and went into the children's room to look at them, Chryssa's little round head lay on the pillow, with nothing on but its own brown hair, and the new cap was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER II.

WINTER DRESSES.

GREAT was the amount of talk next morning at breakfast, and many the discussions and plans. To be sure, the tumblers of milk were very different from the milk at Rose Hill; and the bread was not near so sweet as that which they had at home; but all was new, and that veil of novelty softened and covered up a great many things.

"Only I wish we had some rye-bread toast," said Sybil; "but I suppose we sha'n't see that this whole winter."

"O yes Miss," said Timon—"I can get you some in a minute."

"Can you!" cried both the children. "O then please do."

Timon took up his waiter and marched off, and the children enlarged upon the excellence of the rye-bread toast.

"I do believe the milk will taste a great deal sweeter than it does with this white bread," said Sybil. "How good it was of Timon to go for it!"

But when Timon returned, behold it was a plate of *dry* toast that he had brought. The children looked at each other and were very near bursting into a laugh; but since he had taken so much trouble for them they would not tell him that he had made a

mistake; so they thanked him, and then broke up the toast into the milk and made a very good breakfast.

After breakfast Mr. Rutherford went down to his office, and Mrs. Rutherford began to unpack.

"We put away our things yesterday," said Chryssa.

"I see you did!" said her aunt as she opened the bureau drawers; "but at this rate of putting away, it would take about forty bureaus to hold our clothes. Here is one little coat taking a whole drawer to itself, and another little coat taking another drawer, and two little pair of gloves playing hide and seek in another."

The children laughed, but they thought it was a great pity the little coats could not stay where they had been put so carefully,—it did not seem half so nice to have them hanging up in the closet far above their heads, in the row of little frocks.

"I don't think I have a *great* many frocks, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, when she had two or three times counted over the little skirts which she recognised as her own.

"I don't think you have, my dear,—you have outgrown almost all your frocks, and one of the first things I must do is to get you some more."

"How many?" said Chryssa.

"Two or three."

"O get her a red one," said Sybil.

"Blue is pretty," suggested Chryssa,—"and brown."

"You would look pretty in a brown dress!" said Sybil. "Have red and blue and orange."

And when the new dresses came home they were just what Sybil wished—plain blue and red and orange. And the next day Miss Mantilla came to make them up.

That was the worst of it!—new dresses must be made up,—must be cut and tried on and fitted; and

sometimes Chryssa thought she would rather not have them than go through so much trouble.

No matter what she was doing,—whether dressing her doll, or listening to the most interesting story from Sybil,—Mrs. Rutherford was sure to say,

"Come Chryssa, Miss Mantilla is ready to try on your dress."

And the doll must be laid down and the story broken off for ever so long. That was not all, either. The raw edges of the stuff scratched her bare neck and arms till they were quite red, and the armholes were always tight, and Miss Mantilla's fingers always cold; and it was of no use for Chryssa to shrug her shoulders and twist away from the fingers, for there the fingers must go; and there they did go, and she had to bear it. Then she was turned about, and stroked, and patted, just as if *she* was in wrinkles; and then Miss Mantilla's thimble scraped her neck, and her scissors went clip, clip all round Chryssa's neck; and then Chryssa cried out,

"Oh Miss Mantilla! that pin went quite into me!"

Which Miss Mantilla declared was "too bad," and having pulled the pin out, she stuck it in again further than before.

And Chryssa being by this time quite tired out, she gave a little stretch, and said, "Oh dear!"—and away went half a dozen basting threads. Then it had all to be gone over again.

But when the fitting was done, and Miss Mantilla had only to sew, then Chryssa's part of the fun began; and she used to look on until her eyes were tired. Miss Mantilla's fingers went flying about so fast, that sometimes Chryssa thought she must be only making believe to sew; but the needle flew about too, and Miss Mantilla's fingers left a long train of little stitches. All this was very amusing; but better still was the finishing work, when the

frocks were ready to trim. On two of them the trimming was simple enough,—a yellow braid went upon the blue frock, and a green braid upon the red one, in all proper places on waist and sleeves and skirt, but without any twists or turns. But in trimming the orange dress, Miss Mantilla's fancy took a turn, and so did the green braid—many a one; till Chryssa's little frock looked much more fanciful and complicated than herself, and seemed almost like a uniform in the service of that gay Dahlia, "the King of the Yellows." One of the ladies in the hotel said it looked like spinach and eggs—but what if it did? Chryssa could make out nothing against it on that score; and though the dark red dress was her favourite, she thought the orange frock very pretty and still more wonderful.

And this was the fashion of their life that winter.

Sybil and Chryssa used to wake quite early in the morning, and lie talking to each other, and watching the faint light shadows that came into the room through the cracks of the window-shutters. There was no getting up then; for the fire was not made, and all the children could do was to keep themselves warm in bed. Sometimes they got very tired of lying still, and longed to hear Timon rattling the cinders in the grate; and then again, if Sybil was in the mood to tell stories, the chance was that neither of them wanted to get up at all, not even when breakfast was near ready. On such occasions Janet used to come in and throw open the shutters, and make such a noise that there was no use in trying to tell or to hear stories any more for that morning; and then the children jumped up and got dressed as fast as they could, that they might do something else that was pleasant.

After breakfast there were lessons to get, just as there were at Rose Hill, and there were walks too; but not along the lane and among the sweet flowers.

It was very amusing, though, to see so many people, at least when Chryssa could keep out of their way; for sometimes they almost ran over her; and the sky was just as blue as it was in the country, only you could not see much of it. The church spires, too, looked pretty, stretching away up from the earth, with their little gilt vanes that always told which way the wind blew. Chryssa used to wonder how they found out for themselves. And the shop windows were full of beautiful things; but with so many people standing about that the children never dared to stop, even if Janet would have let them.

When dinner-time came, they all went down to the long table in the great dining-room; but that was not very pleasant, Chryssa thought, and she was always glad to get upstairs again; and they had tea in their own quiet parlour. And after tea there was pleasant talk or reading, and sometimes the children played jackstraws, or drew little pictures out of a book; and then they had prayers, and the young ones went to bed.

Janet always came into their room at night as well as in the morning to see if they wanted anything; and as she was very fond of the children, and liked to help them, so they liked to be helped, and began to let Janet do a great deal too much for them. There was great danger that they would become lazy little children, and quite unable to help themselves. And Mrs. Rutherford knew nothing of it; for after she had kissed them and said good night, she did not see them again till they were asleep.

But it happened one evening, that the washerwoman brought the clothes just after the children had left the parlour; and as soon as Mrs. Rutherford had looked over the clothes, she took Sybil's and Chryssa's into their room to put them away. And this was the state of things.

The candle stood on the dressing-table, and the

glass was swung down as low as it could be; and before the dressing-table sat Sybil in her night-gown, fastening the buttons of that article of dress, and taking the effect thereof in the glass as she did so. Meanwhile Janet was pulling off her shoes and stockings.

"Now Janet," said Sybil, when the last stocking was off, "if you will just bring me my night-cap, I shall be all ready."

"Are you sure you don't want Janet to carry you across the floor to the bed?" said Mrs. Rutherford. "Why, my dear child, if you went on in this way for a year, you would almost forget that you had hands and feet of your own, and quite forget how to use them. You must not come in here any more at night, Janet, nor in the morning either. I should not know what to do with two helpless little girls that could not get their own night-caps."

Janet smiled and said, "Yes, ma'am," and went away; and Sybil sat twisting the strings of her cap, but not looking in the glass just then.

"But why is it wrong, Aunt Esther?" she said at last. "Janet likes to do things for us—she said so."

"I have no doubt of it, my dear. But how would you like to grow up without knowing how to dress yourself?"

"I shouldn't care—" said Sybil, "so long as I had anybody to dress me."

"And so long as you had, it would not so much matter, though everyone ought to know how. But suppose when you grow up that you should have no waiting-maid?"

"But I would have one," said Sybil.

"So I thought when I was a child," replied her aunt, "and I have never had one yet. But jump into bed now—Chryssa is half asleep."

"O no, I am not," said Chryssa, who was sitting

on the floor in her night-gown. "Please talk, Aunt Esther."

Mrs. Rutherford smiled, and sitting down on the side of the bed, she told them both to get in and cover themselves up warm, and she would tell them a little story.

"Do you remember the little sparrows we used to see last summer, Chryssa?"

"The little young birds that used to come on the gravel walk, and the old ones used to feed them?" said Chryssa. "O yes! How pleasant it was last summer, Aunt Esther!"

"Well, it will be pleasant this winter too, I hope," said her aunt. "But my story is about such a family of young birds. They came out of five little speckled eggs in a nest that was built in a rose-bush."

"Was the rose-bush in our lane?" asked Chryssa.

"Yes, if you choose. And when the little birds first broke their shells and came out, they had no feathers, but little thin coats made of down. Ugly enough they were then, though the old birds thought they were beautiful, and they were too weak and small to do anything for themselves. Then the old birds kept them covered up very warm all night and in rainy weather, and would on no account suffer them to leave the nest; and all day they went skimming about, over the grass and over the ground, to find insects and crumbs for the young birds to eat. And when one of the old birds had picked up a crumb, he flew straight to the rose-bush, and alighted on the edge of the nest; and then all the five little birds jumped up and cried out and threw back their heads—and there were five little open mouths waiting for the crumb."

"How did the old bird know which was the hungriest?" said Chryssa.

"The old bird served them all in turn, and never

forgot whose turn it was; but the little birds seemed to forget, and each one opened his mouth every time. And so they lived in the nest till their feathers were grown, and it was time that they should learn to fly; and then the old birds helped them out of the nest and taught them. The little ones were very much frightened at first, and thought it very cruel when their mother jumped up from where they were standing, and flew into a little bush full three feet off; but they soon got used to it, and flew about quite merrily. And then, when she brought them down on the gravel walk and picked up little worms, the young ones ran screaming after her, and thought she would feed them as usual; and sometimes she did, and sometimes she swallowed the worm, and made them find one for themselves. And in that way they learned how to fly, and how to take care of themselves in every way. And now it is time that these little birds should go to sleep."

"There's one thing," said Chryssa; "we shall never have to fly away and take care of ourselves somewhere else, as the birds do."

Mrs. Rutherford stooped down and kissed them both; but she made no reply; and Chryssa wondered if those could have been tears in her eyes, and she thought about it till she fell asleep.

CHAPTER III.

HOUSE BURNINGS.

It was one of the children's great delights to spend the day with Mrs. Salisbury. She was established in town now, at her own house, and always as glad to have the children's company as they were to give it. So very often they would put on their brown merino coats and black tippets and broad white beaver hats, and go with Janet to the great house in Broadway, where their grandmother lived. Sybil and Chryssa thought everything in that house was as beautiful as could be. It was such a pleasant change too from their own room at the hotel; and it seemed so like old times to run up and down stairs, and along the hall, and to pay a visit to the kitchen. And there were such fine places for hiding themselves and their handkerchiefs in Mrs. Salisbury's dressing-room and bed-room,—as for interfering with the folds of the heavy curtains in the parlours, or venturing to lay a handkerchief even *under* the chairs, the children would never have thought of it. The curtains looked much too grand to encourage such pranks, and every chair set its great claw feet down upon the bunches of flowers in the carpet, like Æsop's lion claiming his share of the day's hunt. It was very clear that such parlours were not made for the little scrambling mice to play hide-and-seek in; and Sybil and Chryssa

gladly left the finery for the fun, and went upstairs. And Mrs. Salisbury liked the fun as well as they did, though in a different way. Balls might roll over the floor when she was taking her afternoon nap, the morning paper be cut up to make houses, and her table be covered with whole villages; and just opening her eyes to see that the young ones were in no danger from anything, Mrs. Salisbury would tell them that their houses "looked airy," or that balls must have a good deal of patience,—and go to sleep again. There never was such a house, or such a kind old lady at the head of it; and therefore all particularly fine amusements were reserved for her benefit. It never seemed to occur to Sybil and Chryssa that paper houses would stand on any other table, or that any scissors but grandmamma's could cut them out, —which scissors were always given with many a charge to take care of the points and their own eyes, and generally with the information that a few days ago the grinder had sharpened them nicely. To which the children always replied,

"O how sharp they are! How much did you pay him, grandmamma?"

And she always said "sixpence."

Which the children thought was very reasonable, and wondered how the grinder could make a living.

What a mysterious piece of work it was to make the houses! To fold the paper nicely, and cut off all the top except what was wanted for chimneys, which left, to be sure, a very airy house with no roof; and then to cut a great many little windows, and two or three big doors, and to make as much variety as possible by leaving some windows half open and one door half shut. Then there were paper fences to make and set up, so as to connect the houses and give them a neighbourly look; and sometimes a little paper woman that was supposed to be very talkative might be seen leaning over the fence, or a lazy little paper

man trying hard to stand up in a doorway. But the villages only did one day's work; and before the children went home at night, they used to put all the fences and houses down on the fender, and have what they called "a great conflagration." But this part of the business Mrs. Salisbury always superintended; and when Sybil had been allowed to light one end of the village, both children were made to stand off at a safe distance.

Queer little newspaper houses! all covered with printed letters; and sometimes upon one you could read, "To let,"—or upon another, "Wanted,"—or perhaps, "Prime, Ward & King,"—or "Peter Harmony & Co.;"—while Peter Harmony's next neighbour might be, "Strayed, or Stolen!" The houses took name from the words on them; and during the conflagration Sybil would cry out,

"See Chryssa! R. L. & A. Stuart are burning up!" —or Chryssa would clap her hands as poor little "For Sale" took fire. And when there was nothing left in the pan but a long wavy streak of white ashes, the children would look at it quietly for a minute, and then go down stairs to dinner,—Sybil perhaps making the sage remark,

"I'm afraid we've made a little mess in your fireplace, grandmamma."

"Suppose we were to go back and sweep it up, then," said Mrs. Salisbury; and she turned and walked back to the fire-place and took up the hearth-brush.

"O let me do it," said Sybil.

"Yes, you may do it, but first I will show you how."

"Why, anybody can sweep ashes," said Sybil. "I know how as well as can be."

"You are like a silly little pigeon I used to hear about, when I was a little girl," said her grandmother.

"O please tell us about that," said Chryssa.

"I don't know about being silly," said Sybil, "but I know I can sweep up ashes."

"Very well," said Mrs. Salisbury, "you may try."

And Sybil swept and swept, but the more she did to the hearth the worse it looked; and the ashes just spread about and made white streaks, instead of walking off nicely before the brush. Sybil threw the brush down.

"I don't believe *anybody* could sweep up *that* hearth," she said.

But Mrs. Salisbury took the brush, and in a minute the hearth was as clean as if there had been no conflagration.

"Now why couldn't I do that?" said Sybil.

"Because you didn't know how," said her grandmother.

"But what was the story about the pigeon?" said Chryssa.

"The story is," replied Mrs. Salisbury, "that when the pigeon first came into the world, all the other birds came and offered to teach her to build a nest. The cat-bird showed her its nest all made of sticks and bark, and the sparrows showed theirs which were woven with moss and hair. But the pigeon walked about in a very self-satisfied way, and turning her pretty head from side to side, '*I* know how!' said the pigeon, '*I* know how!' Then the blackbird showed his nest, which was fastened to some reeds, and swung about over the water: and the turtle dove said hers was easier to build than all, for it was quite flat and only of sticks laid together. But the pigeon turned her pretty head as before, and said, '*I* know how!' So at last the other birds left her. And then the pigeon found that she didn't know how at all; and she went without a nest, until man took pity on her, and built a pigeon-house and put some hay in it."

The children were exceedingly amused with this story, and went down stairs turning their heads about

and saying, "*I* know how!" till Mrs. Salisbury told them that she thought they had played pigeon enough for one day.

"I am going up town in the carriage after dinner, children," she said: "do you want to go with me?"

"I do," said Sybil.

"Aunt Esther said I must come home directly after dinner," said Chryssa, "because I have got a little cold, and she didn't like to have me stay out late."

"Do you take Sybil with you then," said Mr. Salisbury, "and I will take Chryssa home. We will go shopping by ourselves."

"Ah, but I haven't any shopping to do," said Chryssa.

"But I have," said Mr. Salisbury, "and I want your help. I'll take care you don't stay out too late."

So Sybil went off in the carriage, and Chryssa took hold of Mr. Salisbury's hand and went forth on foot.

Presently they came near a large toy shop, and even before they got up to it Chryssa could see the baskets and drums and woolly dogs that hung up at the door. Here Mr. Salisbury paused and looked in.

"Are you going to get grandmamma a basket?" inquired Chryssa. "She said she wanted one."

"Not I!" said Mr. Salisbury. "A basket indeed! I've come out for nothing less than a baby."

"A baby!" said Chryssa.

"Yes, a baby. They keep babies here, dont they?"

"O—I don't know," said Chryssa, a little doubtfully,—"they keep dolls."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Mr. Salisbury; "I tell you they are babies,—they cry like mischief if you pinch them hard enough."

"I dare say they would!" said Chryssa, laughing, "because you couldn't pinch them—not the wooden ones."

"None of your wooden babies for me," said Mr. Salisbury,—"I want a wax one. Do you think you could choose out a wax baby, Chryssa, that a little monkey of about your age would like?"

Chryssa looked up at him and began to think she understood the matter; but she was a little body of few words, and so she only smiled and they entered the shop.

There were dolls or babies enough. Dressed and undressed—wax, wooden, and kid,—flaxen hair, brown hair, black hair, and painted hair,—curled hair and straight,—blue eyes and black eyes, and shoes of every possible colour. The wax dolls, indeed, were rejoicing in bare feet, or sometimes in a pair of kid slippers; but the wooden ladies had shoes of more colours than all the rest. Chryssa particularly admired a pair of purple-shod feet; but Mr. Salisbury had his own ideas about shopping. He promptly ordered away all the undressed dolls, saying that it would be time enough for her to make other people's clothes when she could mend her own,—then he threw aside all the satin-dressed, and muslin-dressed, and silk-dressed, and spankled dolls, which he said were much too fine to be looked at for a moment. Chryssa all the while stood smiling by, quite willing that he should choose for her, and glad that she could be in no danger of getting one that cost too much.

At last a doll appeared which suited all parties, and this doll Mr. Salisbury bought. It was moderately large, of wax, and with a little wig of flaxen hair; surprisingly blue eyes, that looked as if no earthly persuasion could induce them to close for a moment; and as surprisingly red lips. She wore a dress of red bombazet, trimmed round the skirt and sleeves with three rows of narrow black velvet, and round the neck with lace; and the dress being low and short-sleeved, displayed her waxen arms and

neck to the best advantage. She had shoes of red leather, and a white tucked petticoat and drawers.

Mr. Salisbury would not have the doll wrapped up, for he said babies might as well get used to the cold air first as last; and they went forth again—Chryssa holding her new possessions very carefully round the waist with her thumb and finger.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LEAF-CUTTER'S STORY.

It did seem strange to Chryssa that the very day when she had intended to take her new doll out a walking, that very day it should rain; but there was no mistaking the fact. Even before she was out of bed in the morning, when she first woke, Chryssa heard the slow tinkle, tinkle, of the rain, as it ran down in the tin leaders from the eaves.

"Sybil," she said, as soon as that young lady gave any signs of stirring; "are you awake?"

"I am now," said Sybil—"I wasn't. Always wake people first, and then ask them."

"Well, I didn't mean to wake you up, but I'm afraid it rains."

"What if it does?"

"Why you know we were going to see the glass-blower, and I meant to take my doll."

Sybil turned over on her back and listened.

"Yes—it rains, sure enough," she said. "Well, we must stay at home—that's all I've got to say."

"But you must say a great deal more; I want you to talk to me. Now Sybil! you've slept enough. We must get up very soon."

"When I grow up, I mean to have my breakfast in bed," said Sybil.

"That will be very lazy," said Chryssa.

"No it won't—it will be very pleasant."

"What would you choose to be, if you could be anything?" said Chryssa.

"I would choose to be," said Sybil,—"a lady having breakfast in bed, and a very interesting book to read."

"I think I would rather be a little bird," said Chryssa, "I should like to live in a nest so much."

"Then you'd *have* to take breakfast in bed," said Sybil.

"O but it wouldn't seem like it," said Chryssa,—"it's so different."

"I'll tell you what we will do to-day," said Sybil, "we'll get Aunt Esther to tell us a story. You know she said she would every rainy day."

"Yes, when we got all our lessons nicely," said Chryssa, "so she did." And inspired by this recollection they both jumped up and dressed themselves without any delay.

"How wet the street is!" said Chryssa, as she opened the shutters and peeped out. "O Sybil, I'm glad we're not little beggar children."

"Yes, is'nt it very happy?" said Sybil; "I wonder how they manage to live!"

"Aunt Esther said she would take us some day to see," said Chryssa.

"Well, but look," said Sybil, "the people over the way will see you undressed at the window!"

"They can't see anything but my night-cap," said Chryssa, coming slowly away, "and that won't frighten them, I suppose."

"No, it's not big enough to frighten anybody," said Sybil, turning round and laughing. "What a little bit of a thing you are, Chryssa!"

"Well—" said Chryssa, as if it were an evil which could not be helped at present.

"Breakfast! breakfast!" said Mrs. Rutherford, coming in. "Who's ready for breakfast?"

"I am," said Sybil.

"I am too—almost," said Chryssa. "I've just to brush my hair and my teeth, and—" the rest of the sentence was lost in the basin of cold water.

"You've just got to do what isn't done," said Mrs. Rutherford, laughing. "Suppose I were to tie some of these petticoat strings—wouldn't that expedite matters?"

"Yes indeed," said Chryssa, "but I was looking at the little beggar children out of the window. And you know you said we might go and see them some time. But oh to-day, Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, twisting herself half round and putting her hands together, "to-day you know you must tell us a story."

"Must I!" said Mrs. Rutherford. "About Rosamond's day of misfortunes, when she got up too late?"

"O no," said Chryssa, laughing, "because I can read that for myself, and I have, a great many times. But I mean a real story—out of your head."

"Because it's a rainy day," said Sybil.

Mrs. Rutherford smiled and promised; and after breakfast when the lessons were done, the two children sat down at her feet on the floor and she began

The History of a Leaf-Cutter.

"It is a sad thing to be separated from one's home and friends," sighed the leaf-cutter, as he lay on the table after his mistress had gone to bed.

"And pray who were they?" said the penknife, rather scornfully; for he was mother-of-pearl and inlaid with gold, and he thought the leaf-cutter had no business to have friends—or at least to speak of them.

"They were very sound substantial friends," said the leaf-cutter,—"at least one of them—my twin

brother; for you must know I was once an elephant's tusk."

"Cruel thing!" said the penknife—(he was four-bladed).

"I don't know about that," said the leaf-cutter,—"people must do as they can; and I was brought up to push my way in the world. I assure you there were few things that could withstand me—that is in my youth; for time has brought me so many changes that I am hardly the skeleton of what I was."

"I should like very much to hear your history," said a little lead pencil; quite modestly however, for he had come from the mine and from the heart of a cedar tree, and felt that he had seen very little of the world, and had hardly a right to ask questions.

"What part of a pencil comes from a mine?" said Chryssa.

"Why, the lead," said Sybil.

"Does it?" said Chryssa. "O yes, I believe I knew that. Well, Aunt Esther; I like that little lead pencil."

The penknife said nothing for some time, and then remarked rather sharply that if they couldn't sleep they might as well talk: and that if the story was begun at once perhaps some people would stop fidgeting. For the lead pencil had rolled over from the other side of the table in order to hear the better.

"You would not suppose," said the leaf-cutter, "that I had ever been six feet long. I can hardly believe it myself."

"And pray how much is six feet?" said the little pencil; for the tallest of his relations did not exceed six inches.

"About half the height of this room," said the leaf-cutter. "But as I was saying, it seems to me now like a dream, when I think of the beautiful jungles I used to frequent in the island of Ceylon."

"Did you come from Ceylon?" said the penknife, with more civility than he had hitherto shown. "I once lived in those parts myself; though indeed I cared little for your tangled jungles, and much preferred the sea water. Ah that was glorious! One could see so far!"

"Yes, it is well to be able to see far when one cannot move about," said the leaf-cutter rather dryly; "but as I went through the jungles whenever and wherever I pleased, their thickness was no objection. However, it is natural to like what one has been used to."

"What do you mean by not moving about?" said the penknife sharply. "I travelled as much as I wanted to do—quite."

The leaf-cutter gave an assenting little tap on the table, and replied,

"Yes, very probably,—it must have been quite a severe trial to take that long journey in the diver's bag. But it signifies little which of us went about the most—I did enough, certainly. Ah it was splendid, the way my brother and I would occasionally run through a rhinoceros! Talk of jungles!—*there* was thickness, I can tell you. But it was a word and a blow with us—right through,—and then throw him off as you, Mr. Penknife, would a quill shaving."

The little lead pencil rolled quite away at this speech, and got under cover of a large book,—the idea of shaving was dreadful to him. But the leaf-cutter looked peaceable enough as he lay there flat on the table—the worst that could be expected from him was a little bluntness——so the lead pencil took courage and rolled back again.

"I do like that little lead pencil *so* much!" said Chryssa.

"I wonder," continued the leaf-cutter, with what was intended for a sigh,—"I wonder how I bear the

change so patiently—only that one cannot well chafe upon this mahogany table. And in my literary pursuits I am really so squeezed up between pieces of business that I have no time for regrets. Then one has to take a peep at all the new books, you know—and then, to be sure, it is my old trade of going through things."

The lead pencil was in a most unsettled state of mind, and rolled backwards and forwards as if he had been on rockers.

"Somebody is making a very extraordinary noise!" said the penknife, thrusting out a blade to see what it was. "If he was my dearest friend, I would cut him!"

The pencil was still immediately—that is, as still as he could, for he could not subside at once into perfect quietness,—so he thought the best thing was to speak.

"Pray, sir," said he—"excuse me, but I think you have not yet told us why you gave up your agreeable life in the jungle."

And the little lead pencil shuddered, and then remarked that "the wind blew very hard."

"Ah, I don't like that," said Chryssa. "Little lead pencils shouldn't tell fibs."

"Maybe the wind did blow," said Sybil.

"Yes, but that wasn't what made him roll about," said Chryssa.

"Then you think that a person may say what is true, and yet not speak the truth," said Mrs. Rutherford.

"And not be true himself, I mean," said Chryssa. "Uncle Ruth said that depended upon the person more than on what he said. Because he might believe something to be true when it wasn't, and he might say true words and mean to make people believe something else."

"Like the lead pencil," said Mrs. Rutherford.

"Well, Aunt Esther, said Sybil,—"the pencil wanted to know why the leaf-cutter gave up the jungles."

"I didn't give them up," said the cutter. "And to say truth, I never rightly understood how it was brought about; but one day my brother and I found ourselves lying on the ground, and we were never able to get up afterwards."

"How did you come here then?" said the penknife.

"I tell you I didn't come; I was brought."

"It must be very stupid to have so little control over one's own motions!" observed some of the sand as it ran through the hour-glass.

"Well," said the leaf-cutter, "I had motion enough, whether it was stupid or not. First, my brother and I were taken up by ever so many men, and put into a cart, and then we were jolted and jarred all the way to Columbo, (that's the capital of Ceylon, Mr. Pencil,) and there I was tumbled into a ship and left in darkness and solitude for I don't know how many months. But the hardest trial awaited me in this country; for the ivory dealer who chose me failed to get my brother, and thus we were separated.

"I perceive," said the leaf-cutter, suddenly pausing in his account,—"I perceive, from the increased attention and silence of my audience, that they are fast subsiding into that state which best befits the hours of darkness."

Nobody answered at first, till a cricket chirruped out that he was wide awake, and meant to remain so, whereupon everybody else made similar assurances.

"When I arrived at the home of my purchaser, then," continued the leaf-cutter, "I lay for a few days in a little dark brick house, with a great many strange tusks that I had never before seen. Of course that was not agreeable, for your real ivory is

seldom sociably inclined, and I thought any change would be a blessing. But it shows how little we can judge of things beforehand.

"As soon as I was released from my prison, I was seized by two great iron paws, and held tight while a saw deliberately—or rather very fast—sliced me up into as many pieces as the overseer thought proper. That particular slice which contained my personal identity was then chipped and sawed, and polished and cut away by a succession of iron tormentors."

"Hard work that," observed the penknife sleepily; for the leaf-cutter had stopped, and it seemed to be expected that somebody should say something.

"Very hard indeed," responded the cutter, "and as you see, I grew thin under it. But I found this—that when one saw had scratched me dreadfully, and left me all in ridges, the next saw always effaced these, but was sure to leave its own marks instead. And I became so used to the business, that at last they left me quite smooth and even in my disposition—indeed I think nothing now could roughen me much that did not go quite through me—and when I was set up in a window to look all day at the sun, I never even tried to look at anything else; though to be sure my window gave me no opportunity. But to do the best we can in all circumstances is without doubt the grand secret of life."

The leaf-cutter paused; but no one responded. For the sands were all still in the bottom of the glass, and the little lead pencil was dull as he could be; and if the penknife had been a morning-glory, he could not have shut himself up more completely. As for the cricket, he was busy eating a hole in the window curtain.

And thus left to himself, at the end of his long story, the leaf-cutter felt rather flat.

"I should think he might," said Sybil. "But why was he set up in the window?"

"To bleach and grow white."

"O!" said Chryssa, "do they bleach leaf-cutters?"

"Yes; and piano keys. The pieces of ivory are put in a sort of greenhouse, close up against the glass, and left there for months till they become quite white."

"Well," said Chryssa, "I'm glad I'm not an elephant's tusk, if they *do* get used to it."

CHAPTER V.

SAPPHIRES.

"CHRYSSA," said Mrs. Rutherford one day after dinner, "will you go up and see Mrs. Clarivaulx this afternoon?"

"Quite alone?" said Chryssa, opening her eyes.

"Quite alone."

"Must I, Aunt Esther?"

"She asked me to let you come."

"I am very sorry," said Chryssa.

"You had better go, Chryssa," said Sybil. "They have so many pretty things there."

"Well, you come too, then."

"No; I've seen them, or at least some of them. I don't want to go again."

"And I don't want to go at all," said Chryssa, "but I'm glad I haven't got my yellow frock on." For Miss Clarivaulx was the lady who had called the yellow frock "spinach and eggs."

So Chryssa laid her doll carefully down on the sofa, and opened the parlour door and went out, and shut it after her in the most deliberate way, as if she were in no haste to have her short walk over. The sun was already down, and indeed none of his beams had got into the large hotel for a long time; and the halls and staircase were in very dingy twilight. Chryssa walked slowly along, feeling her way by the balustrade, and thinking that after all she liked twi-

light much better than daylight for making visits, when a bright light shot up from below. Chryssa peeped through the balusters and saw one of the waiters lighting the great lamp down stairs. And then came another gleam from up-stairs; for some one was lighting a lamp there too.

"It will be just as bad as daylight soon," thought Chryssa; and her little feet went pit-a-pat up-stairs and stopped at Mrs. Clarivaulx's door, when her heart went much as her feet had done. She gave a little knock. Nobody answered, though it was plain from the noise that there was no lack of people within. Chryssa uttered a little sigh, which might have meant, "Oh, dear!" and knocked again. She thought they must have heard her this time, for everybody seemed to stop talking at once; but if anybody cried "Come in," it was in such a faint voice that Chryssa did not choose to act upon it. Once more she knocked, and then Mr. James Clarivaulx opened the door.

He didn't see Chryssa for some time—he was such a tall young man, and she such a little thing; and when he did, he was doubtless puzzled to know who she was and what she wanted. But wisely supposing that she must want something, he asked her to walk in—and in she walked.

"O, it's little Chryssa Rutherford," said Miss Clarivaulx,—and Chryssa had the pleasure of being immediately brought to the fire and kissed by half a dozen people.

They were all sitting about the hearth-rug, with little plates of almonds and raisins, and they offered some to Chryssa; but she had eaten as many as she wanted at dinner.

It was a large room—very long and wide, and full of windows; and full too, as it seemed to Chryssa, of everything else. So many armchairs and footstools, and embroidery frames and musical instruments;

and such a number of little tables covered with little things, and of book-racks filled with books, that Chryssa began to think the family possessions must have no limit. This was the general impression the room made upon her mind when she first went in, for after that she didn't look about at all, but made herself well acquainted with the pattern of the carpet, and never raised her eyes unless somebody spoke to her.

"What do you do with yourself all day, Chryssa?" said Miss Emma Clarivaulx.

"O I don't know, ma'am," said Chryssa; "a great many things."

"A great many things!" said Mr. James. "What are they? come, let me hear. I'll bet you a box of sugarplums you don't do anything but play in a baby house."

"I haven't got a baby house," said Chryssa; "at least not a real one."

"Only an unreal one," said the young gentleman. "What may that be, pray? A castle in the air, peopled with dolls?"

"I don't know, sir," said Chryssa; "but last summer Sybil and I used to lay the two little stools on the floor, and make a baby house out of them."

"And don't the two little stools lie on the floor still?"

"No, sir; we left them standing by the mantelpiece at home."

"I've lost my bet, then," said Mr. James, "and my sugarplums too." And he went to one of the little tables, and brought from thence a little round wooden box very prettily painted, which he gave to Chryssa.

"O no, sir, if you please," she said, drawing back; "I mean—I don't know what it is."

"Why it's sugarplums," said Mr. James; and he opened the box, which was full of the prettiest

sugarplums that could be. "Take it, child—I lost my bet."

"Yes, sir," said Chryssa; "but I mean—I didn't make any bet,—Aunt Esther told me never to say so."

"Well," said Mr. James, "she didn't tell me, and *I* made a bet; and I tell you the box is yours, and here it goes into your pocket." And there it went.

"Didn't you bring your doll to town, Chryssa?" said Miss Emma Clarivaulx.

"Yes, ma'am, I brought it," said Chryssa, with a little smile, "and the other day grandpapa bought me a new one; but I don't care much about playing with it alone, and Sybil does not always want to play with me."

"And what are the playthings that throw this most impersonal doll into the shade?" said Mr. James. "What do you like to play with?"

"O I like Noah's Ark a great deal better," said Chryssa; "but I haven't got one now. And books are better too, sometimes."

"You don't know how to read," said Mr. James, "you're not more than three years old, Chryssa?"

"Yes, sir, I'm six and a half; but I knew how to read a great while ago."

"In the spelling-book, I suppose."

"No, sir, I didn't study the spelling-book much—I didn't like it, and Aunt Esther thought I wasn't learning very fast, so she put me into the Bible."

"Well, that's a safe enough place to be put in," said Mr. James facetiously.

"Hush!" said Miss Clarivaulx. "What do you mean, Chryssa? How did she put you into the Bible?"

"Into the first chapter of Genesis, you know, ma'am—I began there; and I used to spell all the words I didn't know, and so read one verse every day. And by-and-bye I read two verses, and then three. And Aunt Esther used to explain it to me."

"That was when she wanted to get you to sleep, wasn't it?" said Mr. James.

"O no, sir; I think it's very interesting."

"Think what is?"

"Why all that in the Bible," said Chryssa,—"about how there wasn't anything at first, and how the world was made, and the beautiful garden, and the dove and the olive leaf."

"It was there then that you got so fond of Noah's Ark, I suppose," said Mr. James. "Now I'll be bound you don't know what an olive branch is, Chryssa,—what does it look like?"

Chryssa had an indefinite idea that the gentleman was laughing at her; and she looked down at the carpet more gravely than ever.

"I don't know exactly, sir," she said—"I never saw a real one. There was a little picture of one in my hieroglyphical Bible."

"One would think," said Mr. James, "that this child was a little Methuselah, and had devoted one century to dolls, and another to Noah's ark, and two or three more to the Bible. How long did it take you to learn hieroglyphical, Chryssa? ten years?"

"I don't know, sir," said Chryssa. "No, it couldn't be so long as that, because I'm only six years old."

"Well, who was the first woman?" said Mr. James laughing. "I don't believe you know."

"Eve, sir," said Chryssa with a smile.

"No such thing; she was Mrs. Adam."

"Does the Bible say so?" said Chryssa. "I suppose I haven't read that part."

There was a great burst of laughter at this—Mr. James's merriment would not let him sit still; and again Chryssa felt very grave, though she hardly knew why. She was thinking to herself how pleasant it was down-stairs in their own room.

"For shame!" said Miss Clarivaulx, "to tease the child! She is a very good child, and knows more

about some things than you do. Come here, Chryssa —come with me to the window, and I will show you some pretty things. There, we will have the light on this little table. Would you like to see them?"

"If you please, ma'am."

So she went to the little table by the window, where Miss Clarivaulx presently brought a large box which Chryssa thought very beautiful, even on the outside; for it was of some dark wood and inlaid with gold and ivory. But within it was full of beauties. All manner of trinkets and chains, rings and breastpins, and a great many queer things all sparkling with gold and jewels, of which Chryssa knew not the names and could not imagine the use. Miss Clarivaulx took them out one by one, and showed them to her.

Sometimes it was a large green emerald set in a ring, or a purple amethyst not set at all, or, prettier still, some fair blue sapphires; and when a diamond bracelet was displayed, Chryssa's little eyes were quite dazzled, but still she liked the amethyst and the sapphires best. Then came out a little gold dove with blue eyes, and wings all sprinkled with diamonds, so that Chryssa said he looked as if he had been out in the dew; and Miss Clarivaulx held it up against her neck ribbon, where it sparkled beautifully.

"How do you like it?" said she.

"Pretty well, ma'am," said Chryssa. "But it does not look much like a dove."

"Why not?" said Mr. James, coming up to the window. "Because it has no feet?"

"O no," said Chryssa; "Uncle Ruth says that little birds always curl up their feet when they fly, so of course I couldn't see them; but doves have such pretty eyes."

"What's the matter with those eyes? why they are as blue as the sky."

"Yes, sir, but they haven't got any expression," said Chryssa, looking at the turquoise eyes, which were indeed very lack-lustre.

"I wonder what's the expression of your eyes," said Miss Clarivaulx, laughing. "I should like to find out. Chryssa, will you come up here for a little while every day and let me paint your picture?"

"I don't know, ma'am; I'll tell Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, with a face that took the proposal rather gravely.

"Tell her I want you to come *every day*," said Miss Clarivaulx, "and she must let you, to please me."

And then the tea-bell rang, and Chryssa went down-stairs.

"O Chryssa," said Sybil, the minute she opened the door, "come here quick." So Chryssa ran to the fireplace in a great hurry.

"Now open your mouth and shut your eyes——"

"Well—" said Chryssa; "but don't put anything bad in it." And she opened her mouth and shut her eyes, and then immediately opened her eyes and shut her mouth, so quick, indeed, that she was near catching Sybil's fingers.

"Take care!" said Sybil. "Well—what is it?"

"Why, it's only a sugarplum," said Chryssa.

"Ah," said Sybil, "but where do you think it came from? that's the thing."

"Why when you were out yesterday with grandmamma, you went to the confectioner's."

"No I didn't."

"Then Uncle Ruth brought them home."

"No he didn't."

"Well I don't care then," said Chryssa; "I've got a whole box of sugarplums in my pocket."

"Have you?" said Sybil. "Did Miss Clarivaulx give you some? But never mind, you must guess about these."

"But how can I guess?" said Chryssa. "Anybody might have brought them."

"Come, children," said Mrs. Rutherford, "come to tea."

"But I must show Chryssa first," said Sybil. And so she took her into Mrs. Rutherford's room and showed her —— there stood Henry. How glad Chryssa was! and how merry they all were! Chryssa forgot all about Miss Clarivaulx and the blue-eyed dove, and never once thought of Mr. James and his box of sugarplums till she went to undress and felt them in her pocket. And then she was too sleepy to tell anybody about her visit.

But the next morning, when Mr. Rutherford had done reading the paper, he threw it down on the table, and taking Chryssa up on his lap he asked her how she liked Mrs. Clarivaulx's room.

"O very much," Chryssa said.

"Had you a pleasant visit?"

"I think they liked to have me come, Uncle Ruth —I'm sure they tried to please me."

"Well, didn't they please you?"

"Yes," said Chryssa, hesitating a little; "only they laughed at me."

"What about?"

"I don't know exactly," said Chryssa; "but when I told them how Aunt Esther taught me to read, and when I said Miss Clarivaulx's dove hadn't pretty eyes, Mr. James Clarivaulx said I was like Methuselah."

And Chryssa looked up rather sadly.

"Like Methuselah!" said Mr. Rutherford. "When he was how old? six years or six hundred?"

Chryssa laughed.

"I don't know I'm sure, Uncle Ruth, he didn't say. Maybe it was six!"

"At all events, Chryssie, one is not much the worse for being laughed at."

"No, Uncle Ruth, but I thought maybe I had made some mistake."

"I don't suppose Methuselah knew *everything* even when he was nine hundred and sixty-nine," said Mr. Rutherford smiling. "Now tell me about the wonderful box you were describing to Henry this morning."

"The box was beautiful, Uncle Ruth! But oh! the prettiest thing was a precious blue stone, a sapphire! There were a great many diamonds and other things too, but the sapphire was the prettiest."

"Prettier than the diamonds?"

"O yes, I liked it better. This diamond in your pin is pretty, Uncle Ruth, but Miss Clarivaulx's bracelet was so bright,—I couldn't see much, it just dazzled my eyes. I could see a great deal more in the sapphire."

"Papa is laughing at you too," said Henry.

"No, I am not," said Mr. Rutherford; but he did smile a little at something. "What did you see in the sapphire?"

"I don't know," said Chryssa, looking up at him, "but I liked it."

"Do you remember what the Bible says about sapphires?"

"Does it say anything about them?" said Sybil, whirling round on her music-stool, where she had been half playing, half listening for some time.

"They are put above all other stones there, for the throne of God is compared, for beauty and clearness, to a sapphire."

And, taking the Bible, Mr. Rutherford turned to several passages.

"'And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven for clearness.'"

"Does that mean anything more than the sky, papa?" said Henry. "Isn't it just a figurative way of speaking?"

"What do you think of these, then?

"'And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone.

"'Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.'"

"But why should the sapphire be chosen rather than anything else?" said Sybil. "I mean, why do you suppose it was?"

"Blue was the emblem of truth among the ancients," said Mr. Rutherford,—"that may be one reason."

"When it says in Revelation that the wall of the new Jerusalem shall be garnished with precious stones, the first was a jasper and the second a sapphire," said Henry.

"Yes, and in Isaiah this promise is made to the church of God, 'I will lay thy foundations with sapphires.'"

"Chrysocoma doesn't understand you very well now, papa," said Henry.

Mr. Rutherford smiled and stroked her hair.

"Where do you think sapphires come from, Chyssie?"

"Sybil told me last night," said Chryssa,—"they come from Ceylon."

"Yes, the oriental sapphires, as they are called, which are the fine ones. There are some found in Europe, but they are of a whitish colour."

"I thought all sapphires were blue," said Sybil.

"Not all: some are green and some purple and some yellow."

"Miss Clarivaulx showed me a purple stone," said Chryssa, "but she said it was an amethyst."

"Yes, that is the name given to the purple sapphires: while we call the green, emerald, and the yellow, topaz."

"But they look so different," said Sybil.

"Isn't a white or a yellow rose just as much a rose as a red one?" said Mr. Rutherford,—"only they do not take different names like the sapphires. The ruby itself is of just the same materials, but differently proportioned. Another proportion still, makes what is called Adamantine Spar,—a very hard stone that is used in the East Indies for cutting and polishing others that are more precious; and one more change in the proportion gives you Emery—that dark stone the powder of which polishes needles and many other things. Are you tired of hearing about sapphires?"

"O no," said Chryssa, "only I wish I knew what proportion is."

"That you shall know at once. If Aunt Esther were to fill up my cup almost full of tea, and then put in a spoonful of cream, that would be one proportion, and if the cup was half full of tea and the rest of milk that would be another."

"O I understand now," said Chryssa. "I wish I could see the sapphire again—I could think of so many things."

"Yes," said Mr. Rutherford. "And whenever either of you look at a sapphire let it remind you of 'the heavenly city,' 'the New Jerusalem.' 'Which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.' 'For the foundation of the wall was garnished with precious stones; and the second stone was a sapphire."

And before Mr. Rutherford went away he gave the children this text to learn about the heavenly city.

"There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHIMNEY SWEEP AND THE FISHERS.

"AUNT ESTHER," said Sybil, a day or two after the conversation about sapphires, "may I have the three Fishers here to tea?"

"What sort of fishers are they?" said Henry, "trout or whale?"

"You know very well," said Sybil, with dignity.

"It's well for me if I do," said Henry, "for no one seems inclined to enlighten my ignorance. But it might be important to know whether they will require blubber for tea."

"Whale fishers don't eat blubber," said Sybil.

"Yes, they do—after a fashion. When the blubber is boiled down they eat the scraps that are left—they like them too."

"May I, Aunt Esther?" said Sybil, turning again to Mrs. Rutherford.

"If you like, my dear. But how has this friendship grown to such a height in so short a time?"

"Why you know, ma'am, I see them every day at my French."

"Where does your French live?"

"I'd tell them to let my French alone, if I were you," said Henry.

"Well I see them at Mme. Junon's then," said Sybil. "Henry, why do you talk when nobody wants

you to talk?—And to-day, Aunt Esther, I walked home between them."

"*That* was a privilege," said Henry.

"And their sister, the little one, is the nicest little thing I ever saw," pursued Sybil. "Yesterday when I went in she threw her arms round my neck and kissed me."

"I'm sure that was very disagreeable," said Chryssa. "I shouldn't like to have her do it to *me*, at all."

"I shouldn't object to have one little thing throw her arms round my neck and kiss me," said Henry,—"not a fisher girl."

"I'm not a fisher girl, am I?" said Chryssa, laughing and climbing up on his lap.

"Not a bit of it."

"Very well—you may talk," said Sybil. "I think they are remarkably nice girls."

"A good deal remarked upon, at all events," said Henry.

"There, that will do," said his mother. "You may ask them to come here to-night, Sybil, if you choose—or to-morrow." And happy in this permission, Sybil went off to Mme. Junon's.

"I think you and I will have a walk, Chrysocoma," said Henry. "How would that do by way of amusement?"

"O it would do nicely for me," said Chryssa, looking up at him.

"And so it would for me."

"I'll tell you what then," said Chryssa; "I'll get ready directly, and we'll go and buy things."

"What are you going to buy?"

"O a *great many* things—for Christmas. And I've been saving up my money, and Aunt Esther has it. I'm going to make a pincushion for Uncle Ruth. See, here it is, all cut out. It's three-sided."

"So I perceive."

"And you see," continued Chryssa, as she ran for

her coat and then began to put it on; "you see, Henry, I've sewed one side already."

"What a clever little gipsy you are," said Henry. "I hope you mean to give me a pincushion too?"

"No, I believe not," said Chryssa, laughing. "Maybe I sha'n't have time to make another, Christmas is almost here."

"Well, come—are you near ready? Here—I'll tie on this great flapjack of a hat. Don't you get blown away very often?"

"O but I must speak to Aunt Esther first," said Chryssa; and, going off into the further corner of the room, Mrs. Rutherford stooped down and Chryssa put her arms round her neck, and they whispered together. At last Chryssa came back with a satisfied "well—" which said the business was arranged, and taking Henry's hand they went forth.

Chryssa wondered to herself as she went along, why people did not make more use of their eyes: or at least why they *did* run against such little people as she was; for unless she kept a sharp look-out for herself somebody would hit her shoulder and turn her half round, or knock her beaver hat down over her face, or give her tippet such a twitch that it was a marvel it did not go off altogether. Henry took as good care of her as he could, but the streets were very full and the people very busy.

"Now what do you want to buy?" said Henry when they came to a quieter place.

"First," said Chryssa, "I want a thimble—a real silver thimble. It's for Janet, and Sybil is going to give her a new pair of scissors. Won't it be nice?"

"But you don't know how large it must be," said Henry.

"O yes, I do, for Sybil looked on her old one for me, and there was number eight on it. Aunt Esther advised her to do so."

"Number eight," said Henry. "How much do

you suppose a new silver thimble with number eight on it will cost?"

"I don't know," said Chryssa. "Will it cost a great deal?"

"I don't know either; we'll see. What next?"

"Next," said Chryssa, speaking with great earnestness; "next comes something for Sybil."

"What is that to be?"

"It's so hard to tell," said Chryssa. "Because you know she does not like *everything*, and if I was to get what she didn't like it would be a pity."

"It would be sad indeed," said Henry, "for her and you too."

"A book's the best thing," said Chryssa, "but then I don't know what book to buy; and besides I'm afraid I haven't got money enough."

"You had better give me your money," said Henry. "Let me take it and pay for your purchases, and then I can tell you when you are in danger of spending too much."

"Yes, that will be best," said Chryssa, "and then I shall be sure not to lose any of it."

By this time they had reached the thread and needle shop where silver thimbles were to be had; and from the box brought out for her inspection Chryssa chose one that was very bright in its newness and had a number eight engraved very distinctly on the side. This thimble Henry paid for and put in his pocket.

"Aunt Esther said she *thought* Sybil would like an emery bag, if I got a pretty one," said Chryssa.

"What is an emery bag?"

"Why it's something to put your needles in when they get rusty," said Chryssa.

"These are emery bags," said the shopwoman, handing down another box, full of very red cloth strawberries, with very green leaves and very yellow seeds.

"O yes; get her an emery bag then," said Henry; "for she is often complaining of her needles."

Chryssa chose that particular strawberry in which the colours were brightest; and that also was bestowed in Henry's pocket. Then she stood still and thought for some time.

"Well, Chrysocoma," said Henry at length, "what now—what do you want next?"

"I want two things more," said Chryssa. "But you mustn't ask who they're for!"

"Not a word."

"Well then," said Chryssa, "I want a little basket and a pair of gloves. And I should like very much ——do you think I have money enough to fill the basket full of sugarplums?"

"I'll fill the basket for you," said Henry, "and the gloves too, if you want."

But Chryssa assured him that was unnecessary; so he stood by while she picked out a pair of dark kid gloves—and she knew what size they must be too—and then they went to the basket-shop, and bought a pretty little red and white willow basket.

"Now Chrysocoma," said Henry, "when we get home, I'll take all your things to my room, and hide them so that nobody can see them till the right time."

"But we haven't got the sugarplums yet," said Chryssa.

"No, I shall not get them till the day before Christmas; for they should be as fresh as can be. I won't forget them."

"O no, I'm sure you won't. But haven't we got a great deal with a very little money?"

"What do you call a very little money?" said Henry.

"Why a dollar isn't a *great* deal," said Chryssa.

"No, that it is not," said Henry, with a wise shake of his head. "It will not often buy more than half a dozen things."

"I've only bought four things," said Chryssa. "Do you know Sybil is painting a whole packet of new little pictures to give grandmamma; and I think she'll be so pleased. She always likes everything Sybil does."

"Are you painting some too?"

"Yes; I've painted two or three," said Chryssa,—"there's a little basket of flowers and a little red house. Sybil drew the basket tumbling down, because she said it wasn't so stiff. But I don't think the flowers look so pretty—and I had to turn it upside down to paint them."

Henry laughed, and, catching Chryssa in his arms, he ran with her up the hotel steps and then up to their own parlour. There he sat her down and went to his own room with the basket and gloves and emery bag and thimble.

"The three Fishers are coming," was Sybil's first salutation as Chryssa came in.

"Are they?" said Chryssa. "I'm not very glad."

"You ought to be glad," said Sybil. "I wonder you are not. They're not coming till after tea though."

"Why not?" said Chryssa.

"O I don't know—they said they couldn't. I suppose they wish to have tea at home."

"Do you think they'll want to play with my new doll?" said Chryssa.

"Why no, child! I don't suppose they ever do such a thing as look at a doll! Why, they're older than I am."

It was doubtful whether Chryssa was most crestfallen at having made such a mistake as to suppose that the Fishers could play with dolls, or glad that her new doll would be in no danger of being harmed by careless hands. The doll should not have the indignity, however, of being visible and yet not looked at; so Chryssa laid her carefully on her back

in her own bureau drawer, with little pocket-handkerchiefs for a bed, the red dress carefully smoothed down, and the flaxen curls placed so as not to be entangled. When she went back into the parlour Sybil was at the piano, playing away as hard as she could.

Chryssa took out the little three-sided pincushion, and came and sat down close by Mrs. Rutherford and began to sew; and she did not speak a word until the second side was finished.

"Don't you think I had better do the other side now too, Aunt Esther?" she said; "and then it will be all done, and I can put it away."

"I would put it away as it is, if I were you," said her aunt. "You are tired now, and you cannot sew well when you are tired."

"I am *so* tired!" said Chryssa, leaning back against Mrs. Rutherford. "You see Henry and I walked a good way, and I was so busy all the time; and I've been sewing—and the Fishers are coming here to-night."

"Does that make you feel tired now, Chryssie?"

"Yes, I think it does," said Chryssa, "because you know I don't want them to come. O Aunt Esther! if you could just tell me one little story!—it would rest me so nicely."

"Suppose you were to tell me one—wouldn't that do as well?"

"But I don't know any," said Chryssa.

"Look out in the street, and tell me a story about anything you see there. I have no doubt it would amuse me very much."

"But I don't know anything about anything that's in the street," said Chryssa,—"nor about anybody."

Mrs. Rutherford laid down her work, and taking a chair that stood in the window-seat, she lifted Chryssa up on her lap.

"Now tell me what you see," she said.

"A great many things," said Chryssa. "There are houses, and churches, and carts, and carriages, and people, and little children, and chimney sweeps. Tell me a story about that little black chimney sweep, if you please," she added, as the little boy, in his sooty blanket and woollen cap, and tattered pantaloons, went along the street, not walking nor running like other boys, but with a sort of rolling gait, as if he didn't know how to walk.

"I don't know much about him," said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling, with her eyes full of tears, as the little sweep looked up at their window and showed his white teeth in their curious red and black setting.

"Do you know *anything* about him, Aunt Esther?" said the little fair child on her lap.

"Yes, I know something," said Mrs. Rutherford. "I will tell you first what I know, and then what I don't know."

"Yes, that will be very nice," said Chryssa. "Funny, too, I should think."

"No, I'm afraid it will not be funny; but it will be true. First of all then, I know that the little sweep is just of that age when boys love to run and jump, and eat sugarplums and plenty of bread and butter."

"Yes," said Chryssa, "Henry does. But he often gives Sybil and me his sugarplums, because he says he'd rather we should have them."

"And I know," continued Mrs. Rutherford, "that, instead of going sometimes to school and sometimes to play, this little sweep has to work very hard for his breakfast, dinner, and supper—and I know that he has a great strong man for his master, and that such men are not always kind to such little boys. I know that he must get up very early in the morning, and go singing about the streets till some

cook calls to him to come and sweep her kitchen chimney."

"Does he go?" said Chryssa, who was getting very much interested.

"He must go; for his master is with him. Christmas day, perhaps, for then they are most of all busy, he goes out before it is quite light to some house where he has promised to come; and then he creeps up the narrow flue with his brushes — sweeping, sweeping—the black soot falling all about and upon him,—till he has reached the very top of the chimney, and can stick out his head and his brushes into the open air. I know that if he is afraid to go up, or does not clean the chimney well, his master often treats him very harshly. And that is the way he spends the cold winter mornings."

"Is that all you know about him?" said Chryssa, with a little sigh.

"No," said Mrs. Rutherford more slowly, "not quite. I know that poor little child is a sinner—that his sooty blanket is not more foul and black than his natural heart. I know that when the dead, small and great, shall stand before God, that poor little sweep shall be there—along with all the kings and mighty men of the earth. And I know that God is no respecter of persons—and that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost."

"Tell me some more, please," Chryssa whispered, for Mrs. Rutherford sat silent for a while.

"I'm afraid it is too sad a story for you, Chryssie."

"O no," said Chryssa, "I like to hear it. What don't you know about him, Aunt Esther?"

"A great many things, love. I don't know whether he has any time to play—or half enough to eat. I don't know whether he ever has any clothes that are not just as ragged and dirty as those we saw him wear. I don't know whether his

master is kind or cruel; nor whether the little sweep has any bed but the floor or any home but a cellar. I don't know whether he ever had a Christmas present in his whole life. And oh Chryssie, most of all, I do not know whether he has ever heard that God hates sin and will surely punish it. I do not know whether the poor little sweep has anybody in the world to love him, nor whether he knows that the Lord Jesus loved him and gave himself for him."

Sybil had left the piano and come to the window while Mrs. Rutherford spoke, and Henry was there too. All the children were silent for a few minutes when the story was done; then Henry exclaimed,

"Why shouldn't we give him a Bible, and then he will know."

"We will, if he knows how to read, and we can see him again."

"I'll undertake to find him," said Henry—"if it's that boy that went along a little while age. I've seen him before."

"Yes, that was the boy," said Chryssa. "And he had an old blanket on, and a cap with a little red topknot."

"But then, perhaps, he may not know how to read," said Sybil, "and perhaps his master wouldn't let him keep a Bible."

"We could try," said Henry. "And if he couldn't read we could talk to him."

"You could not talk much to him in the street," said Mrs. Rutherford, "and I could not let you go home with him. You may bring him in here if you like. Now Chryssie dear, jump down, for I must go out on some business."

The children talked a great deal about the story and the little sweep all the afternoon; but as evening drew on, Sybil's thoughts came back to the Fishers, and their coming to spend the evening.

"I wonder how we shall amuse them," she said. "We can play on the piano—that's one thing."

"And blind man's buff—that's another and a better thing," said Henry. "I'll catch all the Fishers and eat them up in no time."

"I think you would make a good deal of noise if you did," suggested Chryssa.

"I think they would," said Henry.

"Well, but help me to think," said Sybil. "We have so few things here—they're all at home. There are my costume cards—and the conversation cards—and the engravings—and the piano—"

"And the window curtains," said Henry. "Hide the handkerchief is rather stupid, but it's better than those conversation cards. Leave them to me—I'll frighten them out of their wits, and that will be amusement enough."

"Ah no, please don't," said Sybil. "Now Henry be good, will you? just this once; and don't do anything disagreeable. If you had boys here to see you I wouldn't try to frighten them."

"Good reason why," said Henry—"you couldn't if you did try. But I won't do anything *very* bad, Sybil—you know I won't when I say so."

Tea came, and soon after that the three Fishers; and the younger one immediately gave Chryssa such an embrace and kiss, that for some time after Chryssa only looked on in amazed silence.

When the engravings and the costumes and the conversation cards and the piano had done their part of the entertainment, the children were allowed to go into Mrs. Rutherford's room and play any active games that they liked; and then Henry certainly did his part well. He caught the Fishers and everybody else when he was blinded; and when he was not, he jumped over people's heads and crawled away under their arms, so that it was next to impossible to catch him. Then he hid the handkerchief in all manner

of impossible places, so that the children were in despair; and yet all the time he found out their handkerchiefs with no trouble at all. At last he hid Chryssa herself, and nobody could find her. They looked under the bed, and in the bed, and behind the bureau.

"Well, little people, have you played long enough?" said Mrs. Rutherford, opening the door. "Where is Chryssa?"

"That's just the thing," said Sybil,—"Henry has hid her and we can't find her."

"Do you give up?" said Henry. "Don't tell them, mamma—I'll tell you. Do you give up?"

"I suppose we must," said Sybil, "but it's very provoking."

"Come out, Chrysocoma," said Henry.

Then one of the window shutters began to move, and it opened quite wide out, and there stood Chryssa behind it.

"Now if you are all ready," said Mrs. Rutherford, "I want you to come into the other room and try a new sort of play."

"A new sort?" said all the children. "Is it quiet or noisy?"

"Quiet."

"That's good, for we're tired. Is it my lady's toilette?"

"Why that's as old as the hills," said Henry, "and noisy too."

"You shall see," said Mrs. Rutherford, as she led the way into the next room. "Now you must all stand with your faces to the wall, and your hands close over your eyes."

"How long?" said Sybil.

"Till I tell you to come and sit down."

"This is a very queer play," said the children, as they took the required position. But before they had stood there many minutes their curiosity became

much excited, for Mrs. Rutherford was stepping about the room, and what could she be doing?

"Now you may come and sit down," she said at last; and the children whirled round like so many tops and ran to take their seats.

And there upon the table stood a dish of oranges and another of little cakes and another of cocoa-nut cakes and mottoes. And that was the play.

CHAPTER VII.

SEEDS OF HAPPINESS.

One would have thought that all holiday preparations must be entirely finished by this time, so long had the children been talking and looking forward; and yet on the morning of the twenty-fourth of December, when Christmas was just at hand, everybody seemed as busy as if it had taken them quite by surprise. Chryssa in particular had the third side of the little pincushion greatly on her mind; but as Mrs. Rutherford represented to her that if she fainted away for want of food neither the pincushion nor anything else would get done, Chryssa consented to eat her breakfast before beginning operations in the gift line. But as much of the work in each one's thought was to be kept secret from some one of the others, the faces around the table that morning were singularly grave and considerate. Only Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford preserved their equanimity, and talked and laughed much as usual. And they even knew what they were eating for breakfast; which the children did not, but probably mistook the bread for pincushions and the tea for a decoction of sugar-plums. But Mr. Rutherford desired Timon to give them an early dinner in their own parlour that day, and that was something remarkable.

After breakfast the work began in earnest. Now there was really very little to do. but then talk-

ing it over and thinking it over and showing and admiring, made it go twice as far. The pincushion was finished and filled with pins and wrapped up in white paper; and then Chryssa went off with Henry to his room to see the sugarplums and fill the basket. There were three white papers of sweets on the table by the basket.

"Three papers!" said Chryssa. "O Henry, what can be in them? I didn't know you were going to get more than one."

"Look and see," said Henry. "They are prettier mixed, don't you think so?"

"O yes, a great deal prettier," said Chryssa, as she opened the first paper. It was full of burnt almonds, red and white. And the second had chocolates, and the third all manner of pretty and nice drops.

"But there's no candy," said Chryssa.

"No," said Henry, "I thought these would look best in the basket. You know the sticks of candy wouldn't go in whole, and they are not so pretty broken."

"No, that's very true," said Chryssa. And having put a good layer of the almonds at the bottom, she poured on some chocolates and then plenty of the drops, and then more almonds, until the basket was quite full.

Sybil meanwhile had been finishing her preparations; but the grand difficulty of all was, where the presents should be put.

"It's very easy for the rest, you know," said Sybil, "because we go to bed first; but if we put the things in their room they'll see them to-night, and so spoil all the fun."

"Yes, indeed," said Chryssa. "I'll tell you, Sybil; we'll get up in the morning very, very early, and run in without making the least bit of noise, and put them on the dressing-table."

"How shall we do about Janet's presents?" said

Sybil. "O I know! You know she'll come in here while we're at breakfast, to open all the shutters and make the bed. Now let us put the thimble and scissors in a paper, and tie it up tight, and then write 'Janet' on the outside. Then we could hang it on the bedpost or on one of the knobs of the shutters, and she'd be sure to find it."

The little package was made up accordingly, and labelled; and Chryssa gave Mrs. Rutherford the pair of gloves for Henry and the emery bag for Sybil, to put with the rest of their presents.

Then there was nothing to do but to sit together in the corner and talk of other Christmas days, and the presents they had had; and "Do you remember, Chryssa?" and "O Sybil you haven't forgotten?" was heard very often.

"What would you like to find in your stocking to-morrow?" said Sybil, "if you could choose."

"O I don't know," said Chryssa,—"I think my stocking would be rather funny if *I* had to fill it. Let me see—first I should put in a cat."

"No you *wouldn't!*" said Sybil.

"Yes I should. A cat, and a bunch of flowers, and a book—no, two books, or three—and a new parasol. Because mine has never been *very* good since it was run over."

"Well, I think you would have a queer stocking," said Sybil. "It wouldn't be half so good as mine. I should put in books, too—a great many; but then they would be large splendid books!—with fine engravings, full of them—and very interesting,—and bound in all sorts of different ways."

"Wouldn't you put in anything but books?" said Chryssa, upon whom the description of Sybil's imaginary library seemed to make a deep impression.

"I don't know," said Sybil. "I might if there was any room after I had books enough. Yes—I would put

in a box of chessmen, and some new music—and a watch."

"Then you wouldn't have any sugarplums," said Chryssa.

"Yes I would. I'd shake them down among the other things—burnt almonds and carraway comforts and rosedrops."

Chryssa sat quite silent with the thought of such a magnificent stocking.

"What do you suppose you *will* get?" said she.

"O I don't know," said Sybil. "I don't want to think about it. I can't bear to know what I'm going to have beforehand."

"Come to dinner, little people," said Mr. Rutherford from the table. "What are you talking about so busily?"

"O we were talking about our stockings," said Chryssa. "Sybil was telling me what she would put in hers if she had to fill it."

"How would she like to find it unfilled?"

"I shouldn't like it at all," said Sybil.

"How many children do you think there are in this city whose stockings are as empty on Christmas morning as on any other, till they put their feet in them?"

"O I don't know," said Sybil—"a great many, I suppose. But then they are poor children, Uncle Ruth, and have no stockings."

"That makes the case better, certainly."

"What happy children we should be if we could only go barefoot!" said Henry.

"No, but I mean," said Sybil, "you know Uncle Ruth, they don't expect presents, and so it don't matter so much."

"Don't you think it would be a pleasant surprise to them to have presents?"

"Yes, I suppose it would," said Sybil, rather unwillingly.

"What is the reason you dislike to talk about these poor children?" said Mr. Rutherford, smiling and patting her shoulder.

"It is so uncomfortable—" said Sybil, with a little corresponding twist on her chair—"and it makes me feel as if I ought to give them my presents—and I don't want to do that."

"And I don't wish you should,—your presents would not be fit for them. But let us see if there is nothing we can do. We expect to be very happy ourselves to-morrow, and I for my part should like to give away a little happiness to-night. Let us see how much we have to spare, and then we will go together and spend it."

"Money do you mean, papa?" said Henry. "I have got half a dollar."

"And I have got sixpence," said Chryssa.

"And so have I," said Sybil; "at least I have got two shillings."

"Well that's four sixpences," said Chryssa, "and mine makes five. Five sixpences and half a dollar."

"That is just four shillings and sixpence," said Mr. Rutherford, smiling.

"What have you got, mamma?" said Henry.

"O Aunt Esther must have a great deal," said Chryssa.

"I haven't a great many sixpences," said Mrs. Rutherford. "I have got half a dozen pair of little woollen stockings."

"Aunt Esther!" said Sybil, "is *that* what you've been knitting all these evenings before the candles were lit, when nobody else could see to do anything?"

"That's the way mamma always does," observed Henry, as if he felt quite proud of her.

"Well," said Mr. Rutherford, "we have something to give away, and that is a thing to be glad of. The proverb says, 'Would all mend one we should all be mended;' and if everybody would try to make some

one person happy, there would be few miserable people in the world. Now let us get ready and be off."

"Why, where are we going?" said the children.

"To find somebody that needs our spare happiness," said Mr. Rutherford, smiling.

The children ran in great haste to put on coats and hats, and when they came out Mrs. Rutherford was all ready with her parcel and Mr. Rutherford had a small basket in his hand.

"What have you got, papa?" said Henry. "Bibles! O that is the best of all."

"And here are other little books too," said Sybil. "Anna Ross, and the Young Cottager, and Nathan Dickerman."

"But here is another basket," said Chryssa, "only there's nothing in it."

"That is for Henry to carry, and we will find something to put in it," said Mr. Rutherford. So they set out.

It was a cold afternoon, and the sun was off the streets, and the wind very keen. Certainly if anybody had spare happiness on hand, there was no want of people who had none. How cold the little ragged children looked; and the blind men sitting by the wayside heard no cry that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by:" and no one told them where to look for him.

"How shall we spend our money, Uncle Ruth?" said Sybil; for Chryssa walked behind between Henry and Mrs. Rutherford.

"How would you like to spend it?"

"I don't know," said Sybil.

"Chryssie," said Mr. Rutherford, looking back at her, "what will you do with your sixpence?"

"I don't know where we are going," said Chryssa.

"We are going to see some poor children," said Mr. Rutherford. "What will you take them?"

"Would they like some cake?" said Chryssa.

"I've no doubt they would, very much."

"I wonder which would be best," said Chryssa, "some cake or some candy. Which could I get most of, Aunt Esther?"

"You can buy six long pieces of gingerbread, or a little round loaf cake, or six sticks of candy."

"I think I'll buy the candy," said Chryssa. "I should like that best myself."

"I shall buy them some gingerbread," said Henry. "It's worth all the candy that ever was heard of."

So they all went to the candy shop, where Chryssa chose out six sticks of candy of six different kinds, and then to the baker's. There Henry got his gingerbread, and Mrs. Rutherford bought two loaves of bread and a pound of soda cakes.

"What are those for, mamma?" said Henry.

"One of the children is ill."

Then they walked on again.

"Uncle Ruth," said Sybil, "if one of them is ill why shouldn't I buy some white grapes for her? I always like grapes better than anything when I am ill."

"That is a good thought, my child," said Mr. Rutherford, "you cannot do anything better."

"Sybil always thinks of the best things," said Chryssa, with a little sigh. "But then I had only sixpence."

But when she felt Mrs. Rutherford give her hand a little squeeze on one side, and Henry on the other do the same, Chryssa brightened up, and looked down into Henry's basket at her paper of candy. It didn't look very large, but Chryssa knew it was sweet.

When they went into the grocer's shop for the grapes, Mrs. Rutherford bought two or three more things and put into the basket; and then they walked away very fast, and turned off into a little street that was both dirty and narrow. So was the house where they stopped and went in; but the room was clean where the poor children lived, and the children

themselves were dressed neatly, though their frocks and aprons were patched a great many times. Two of them sat on the floor winding rags for the rag-carpet makers; and the eldest lay in the bed looking very pale and sick. She had slipped down on the ice and broken her arm, and it was all bound up in splints and bandages. The mother of the family was sewing. But she put down her work when they came in and gave them the best seats she had; and then Mrs. Rutherford told her to go on with her sewing and they could talk to her just as well.

"How fast she sews!" whispered Chryssa to Sybil. "But she has forgotten to put any coals on the fire and it has gone out."

"Hush!" said Sybil in a low voice; "I don't believe she has any to put on."

Chryssa felt almost frightened at the very idea; and moving softly up to a little box that stood on the hearth she looked in. It was black, as if there might have been coal in it, but now there was nothing but a few chips. Chryssa thought she would try to find out a little more.

"What made you let the fire go out?" she said to one of the children who were cutting rags. The child looked up, but made no answer; and then the woman got up as if she had heard the words too, and threw some of the chips in the grate and set fire to them; but it wasn't what Chryssa called a fire after all.

Then Mrs. Rutherford gave the poor children some of the bread and gingerbread for their supper; and Sybil gave the little sick girl the paper of grapes; and she said she had never tasted anything so good in her life. But the candy and some other little things were given to the mother, to hang up in the new stockings after the children should be in bed.

So Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford came away, having left a good deal of happiness behind them, and yet came away with more than they went in with.

"Papa," said Henry, "it makes me think of what they said in the Pilgrim's Progress.

> 'A man there was, (though some did call him mad,)
> The more he cast away, the more he had.'"

"Aunt Esther has got three pairs of stockings yet," said Sybil.

"Now I think you little ones have walked far enough," said Mr. Rutherford; "therefore you may go home with Aunt Esther, and Henry and I will take the basket and the rest of the stockings and try to find somebody that wants them."

It was getting dark as the children reached home, and the shops were lit up, and the beautiful toys and candies and books showed better than in the daylight. And whenever a gentleman passed them with a nice paper-covered parcel in his hand, or a lady went by with what looked like a Noah's Ark or a box of tea-things done up in a paper, the children smiled and touched each other, and thought there was happiness going home for somebody!

"We had such a nice walk!" Henry said, when he came home; "and papa gave away everything that was in the basket, and all his Bibles and books; and he seemed to know just where to find the people that wanted them. And what was the best, he sent that poor woman where you went a whole load of coal, and two or three other people just as much."

"What did you do with your half-dollar?" said Sybil.

"I bought a toy for a poor little sick boy papa told me of."

The children went to bed very early, for they were tired; but after they had slept a good while something woke them up,—not broad awake, but just so that they could see a candle in the room, and hear a pleasant rustling of paper near the head of the bed. There was happiness preparing for them!

CHAPTER VIII.

HAPPINESS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many thousand young people that were in haste to begin so pleasant a day as Christmas-day, the day was long in coming; and of all things that lay in bed late that morning the sun himself was the latest. In fact he did not get up so late again for many a long month. Christmas had begun, and still the stars were to be seen and the sun was invisible. At last however there came a little bright look to the eastern horizon, just in one spot like a little half circle; and in the country the cocks began to crow, but in town nothing awoke. Then two or three little clouds that were flying about the sky ceased to be mere dark spots, and looked soft and whitish, and the frost on the ground began to show itself. For everything was covered with a thick frost, and the earth was frozen hard. The sun had not made his appearance yet, but only sent on a light ahead; and some of the people were content with that and would not wait for him. Anybody that happened to be in the street might have seen a little glimmer from several windows; where in one room there was a maid-servant lighting the fire, and in another a group of children in their nightgowns and nightcaps, examining their new-found treasures.

Sybil and Chryssa had no light in their room—

Mrs. Rutherford always said it was soon enough for them to get up when they had daylight to work by; but they woke up almost as early as if they had been country chickens.

"Merry Christmas! Sybil," came out of the darkness on one side of the bed.

And "Merry Christmas! Chryssa," from the darkness on the other.

"Isn't it almost time to get up?" said Chryssa.

"Why no, child; you can't see your hand yet."

"It looks quite light out of the window," said Chryssa.

"I think it looks quite dark," said Sybil. "I can see stars. Now, Chryssa, I'll tell you what we'll do. You know the stockings are on the bedposts just here by our heads."

Chryssa gave a little wriggle under the blankets, expressive of her belief in the fact.

"Well," said Sybil, "I'll stretch out my hand and feel my stocking and you stretch out your hand and feel yours; and then we'll try and guess what we had hold of. Now, Chryssa, you must take but just one feel."

"No," said Chryssa, getting up in the bed and trying to find the bedpost.

"You'll fall out of bed," said Sybil, "if you don't take care. There lie down—I've felt mine!"

"So have I!" said Chryssa, huddling down out of the cold air. "I felt the cat!"

"Nonsense!" said Sybil,—"there isn't a cat in your stocking—you needn't think it."

"But I *felt* it," said Chryssa. "May I get up again and take her out? because she must be very uncomfortable there."

"There isn't one there!" said Sybil. "How long do you suppose a cat would remain still in your stocking and never mew nor move?"

"She might have mewed when we were asleep,"

said Chryssa, turning over on her back to be ready for the next outcry.

"No, no, you lie still," said Sybil, "and we'll talk about it. It couldn't be a cat, but it might be something else. I felt something sharp in my stocking."

"What did it feel like?" said Chryssa.

"I don't know," said Sybil—"that's the very thing. It was too thick for a book I should think, this end of it."

"Well, why shouldn't we get up and look?" said Chryssa. "I'm sure I can see my hand before my face now."

"I shall wait," said Sybil, "till I can see the furthest corner of the dressing-table. It will be dark enough then, you'll find. Besides, I like to think about things a little while. What could that have been, Chryssa?"

"It *must* have been a cat," said Chryssa.

"I don't believe it was any more a cat than you are," said Sybil; "but I meant the thing in my stocking."

"O—" said Chryssa. "Maybe it was a box."

"A box?" said Sybil—"I don't know—it felt rather like that. But what could be in it?"

"Sugarplums?" suggested Chryssa.

"No, it isn't a sugarplum box—I don't want that to be in it,—it's sharp cornered and hard, and down near the foot; so it must be something heavy."

"Why did you feel the foot?" said Chryssa. "I put my hand in at the very top."

"I didn't want to put my hand in—only to feel. O box! I wonder what you are!"

"Well, why don't you look?" said Chryssa.

"Could see if I did."

"O Sybil!" said Chryssa, suddenly jumping up to a very upright position on her knees in the bed; "we haven't put the things in Aunt Esther's room

yet! Let's go do it now, and maybe it will be light by that time."

"There's no use in going till we can see," said Sybil. "We might break our necks over the chairs, and wake aunt besides. You'd better lie down again."

"I think I see a little bit of the dressing-table, though," said Chryssa.

A little dark shadowy line did begin to show itself in that corner, and the children watched it with strained eyes. Then they shut their eyes for a minute, and when they looked again the dressing-table was plainly to be seen.

"Now I'll tell you what, Chryssie," said Sybil, "we'll take the other things first; and then we can enjoy ours in peace and comfort."

So they both jumped up, and going very softly on tiptoe through the half-open door into their aunt's room, Chryssa laid her pincushion on the table and set the little basket of sugarplums close by; and Sybil placed there a guard-chain she had made for Mr. Rutherford and a pretty silk bag for her aunt, and then they ran back again.

"When did you buy the bag?" whispered Chryssa.

"The other day when I was out with grandmamma. Now for the stockings!"

It was dark yet, but they felt about till the stockings were unfastened from the bedposts, and then jumped into bed—each with her prize.

It would be too much to describe all that the stockings held,—to tell of the books and pictures and sugarplums, and from whom they came. Chryssa's cat turned out to be a pretty little fur muffler, to wear round her neck when it was too warm for her tippet; and Sybil had one like it. The box was the very box of chessmen which Sybil said she would put in her stocking; and the men themselves were prettily carved out of red ivory and white.

The day was brightening, and the milkmen ringing their bells; but the children heeded them not. Then from under the window a little voice came up, "Sweep ho!"

"There's the little sweep!" said Chryssa. "O I wonder if he's had any presents!"

"Well never mind that now," said Sybil, "because we can't give him any till we're up and dressed at least. Have you got everything out of your stocking?"

"Yes; I believe so," said Chryssa, shaking it out.

"Here's something in the toe of mine—" said Sybil,—"some queer little thing—I wonder what it can be."

Chryssa knew what it was well enough; and she sat there and laughed to herself in the dark—for dark it was still, compared to broad daylight—but she said never a word.

Sybil shook out the little package, and then took off one paper after another till she came to the little red emery-bag, with its green leaves and yellow seeds and strawberry shape.

"Why you funny child!" she said, "you must have given me this."

"Yes, I did," said Chryssa. "Do you like it?"

"It looks pretty," said Sybil, "as well as I can see it, and it will be very useful. I'm very much obliged to you, Chryssie." And she leaned over and kissed her, and Chryssa felt paid.

"I wish I knew where all *my* things came from," she said.

"Which do you guess is my present?" said Sybil.

"My Noah's Ark," said Chryssa.

"No; Henry gave you that. He told me he meant to give you it."

Chryssa guessed and guessed.

"It's the little silk apron," said Sybil; "and I made it for you myself—trimmed it and all."

"O I'm sure it's beautiful!" said Chryssa, trying eagerly to get a better view of the apron. "How good you are, Sybil! I like it so much better for your making it!"

"Aunt Esther thought you would."

"And I'm sure this is the prettiest Noah's Ark I ever had, too," said Chryssa, once more slipping back the little hook that fastened in her antediluvian treasures. "I saw a beautiful red cow and a yellow bird—and there's a pigeon."

"No; it's a dove," said Sybil. "Don't you know the dove brought the olive branch?"

"Then were there pigeons too?" said Chryssa.

"I'm sure I don't know—yes, I suppose there were," said Sybil.

By this time everybody was stirring. Mrs. Rutherford came in to tell the children how pleased she was with her presents, and then they got up, that they might enjoy theirs in more comfort.

The first thing for Chryssa to do after breakfast was carefully to examine the Ark, within as well as without, and to set all the different animals in order upon the table, that she might know what sort of a flock she had.

A strange-looking flock it was. A grey elephant with very white tusks, a grey camel with one hump, and a yellow camel with two; a black horse, more shiny than even Cherry and Dash, and another of a reddish and very freckled complexion; while the red cow turned out to be only a white cow with red sides, apparently a distant relation of the white dog with brown ears. Then there were birds—not in pairs, but single specimens—a yellow bird and a black bird, and a blue bird and a grey bird—a duck, a hen, a swan, and a pigeon. There was also a full representation of the human race,—Mr. and Mrs. Noah in long yellow dresses and brown hats; while another couple in red, one in brown, and one in blue, repre-

sented his three sons and his three sons' wives. There was besides a rat and a mouse, and a butterfly and beetle of overshadowing dimensions; while a pretty white sheep and a spotted pig came out hand in hand, their feet being fast locked together; and the dove, lest she should lose her olive leaf, had it glued fast to her mouth. Altogether it was a very fine affair, and the animals were quite manageable, and went back into the Ark without the least difficulty. The elephant had sometimes a fancy to poke his trunk out, and the duck's bill was now and then in the way, but these difficulties were soon got over.

Sybil meanwhile was regaling herself with a new book in one corner, and Henry with one of his new books in another; while Chryssa made the grand tour of her presents, and enjoyed them all by turns.

As for Mrs. Rutherford, the bag hung on her chair and the basket stood on her table; and whenever she caught Chryssa's eye she would smile at her and take a sugarplum.

In the course of the morning, just when Chryssa had with great difficulty persuaded the dove with the olive leaf to perch quietly upon the ridge of the Ark, with the pigeon and blue bird on either side; the other animals being tastefully grouped around on the crimson table-cover, and Noah and his family variously employed about them; Timon knocked at the door. Mrs. Rutherford said "Come in," and in walked Timon with a large wooden cage. And from the cage there came a soft cooing, half in fear and half from habit. The box was for Master Henry, Timon said, from one of the gentlemen in the house; and the children all ran to look in.

There were two of the prettiest birds that could be, with brown bills, and grey heads, and grey and white backs, and purple and green necks. Their feet and eyes were red, but not with weeping; for except a little surprise and confusion, they looked as comfort-

able as birds need be. They were Carrier pigeons, Mrs. Rutherford said.

"What are Carrier pigeons?" said Chryssa.

"Why, pigeons that carry letters," said Sybil. "I've read about them."

"Wait till next summer," said Henry, and see if they don't bring you letters."

"Then you must send them to Rose Hill to spend the winter," said Mr. Rutherford.

"Yes, so I must," said Henry. "Garrett will take care of them."

"But how could they bring us letters?" said Chryssa.

"Why, you see," said Henry, "if I leave them at Rose Hill all winter, they'll like it so much that they'll be anxious to go back there, naturally. Then in the spring I shall take them to school with me; and love of home being a characteristic of pigeons which deserves encouragement, I shall some day write a letter and tie it under the wing of the pigeon that is most homesick. Then I shall dismiss him from school—in other words, let him fly."

"But then you'll lose him."

"The pigeon being dismissed from school," said Henry, "will do precisely what I should do in similar circumstances,—he will fly to Rose Hill as fast as his wings can carry him; and under one of his wings you will find my letter."

"Shall we really?" said Sybil. "I should like to see it so much, and then I should believe it better than ever I did. O I wish you could try immediately."

"But the pigeon always goes to the place where he last lived," said Henry, "so it would be no use. We don't want to give him back to Mr. Smith or Mr. Tompkins."

"How fast can his wings carry him?" said Chryssa.

"I don't know how fast mine can fly. Some Carrier pigeons have been known to fly almost a hundred and fifty miles an hour."

"But how shall we know how fast yours fly?" said Sybil.

"Why," said Henry, "I will write on my letter what o'clock it is, or at least at what o'clock I send the pigeon; and then when he comes you must see what o'clock it is, and so you will know. O mamma, I wish you would tell the children your pretty story about the Carrier pigeon! I should like to hear it again myself."

The children joined their entreaties, but Mrs. Rutherford said,

"Look at the clock! Don't you know that we are to eat our Christmas dinner with Mrs. Salisbury? Some other day you shall hear the story."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CARRIER PIGEON.

It so happened that the very next day after Christmas was stormy; and the children not only put in their plea for "a rainy-day story," but begged that it might be that very one of the Carrier pigeon, about which Henry had said so much. Mrs. Rutherford therefore took her work and sat down between the fire and the window, and Henry put himself on the floor at her side; while Chryssa stood by the table to overlook the march of a long caravan with the two camels at its head. For she thought she could look and listen too; and besides Sybil sat by the table with her work, and the new emery-bag was there in plain sight, and sometimes in use; which was to Chryssa a source of great satisfaction. And all being thus quietly established Mrs. Rutherford began.

"The Carrier pigeon that I am to tell you about, was for three weeks shut up in a snow-white egg-shell; and in the same nest there was another little pigeon, a prisoner like himself. The nest was not much of a nest—only some hay laid together in a little room in the pigeon-house; the little room having but one door and no window."

The children looked at each other when Mrs. Rutherford said it wasn't much of a nest, and Sybil said,

"Do pigeons *never* make a nice nest, Aunt Esther?"

"The tame pigeons make none at all, as I told you; they merely take the box and the hay that are provided for them. And the nest of the wild pigeon is but a poor affair compared with that of the oriole and all the weavers and basket-makers of the bird race. It is only a few sticks and straws laid loosely together. But these Carriers lived in a pigeon-house; and there the two little birds broke the shell and came out two unfledged little pigeons.

"The two old birds had taken turns in hatching the eggs and now took equal care of the young ones. For a time these were fed from the crops of the old birds; who first swallowed the food, and when it had undergone some peculiar change in their crops brought it up again, and put it into the little bills that were always wide open for something to eat. Then by degrees they were allowed to have a little grain with this food; and at last grain alone,—oats and corn and beans and buckwheat. By this time the soft down which had covered them when they first came out of the shell gave place to feathers, and they were soon completely dressed in pigeon-clothes.

"It was a proud day for the little Carriers when they first went out of their room door, and flew off with the old birds in the fresh sweet air and sunshine among the trees. They thought at first that they would never go back; but their wings were soon tired and they were glad to fly home, and creep through the little door, and nestle down under the old pigeon's wings.

"One day when they were full-fledged, they found upon getting up in the morning, that their door had been made fast during the night; and though there was a little hole to let in the air, there was none by which a pigeon might get out. Then suddenly a man

Hetty—The Carrier Pigeon.

came to the pigeon-house, and opening a door in the roof which nobody knew of before, he put down his hand, brought up both the young Carriers, and put them in a basket. Then he opened the little door and let the old ones out; but the young ones he carried off in his basket, walking along the high road, till they were a mile or two from home.

"The man stopped then, and setting down his basket, he raised the cover."

"And did the pigeons get away?" said Chryssa, turning round with her little make-believe pigeon in her hand.

"To be sure they did. Both flew up out of the basket, and went darting about as if they were not sure of their freedom even yet. Then they flew round in a little circle, and then in one a little larger and a little higher from the ground, and so up and up, and wider and wider, each time, till they caught sight of the barn and pigeon-house where they were brought up. And then they darted off in a straight line, and never stopped till they were at the pigeon-house and had run through the little door into their old nest."

"But what did they fly round and round for?" said Sybil.

"It is supposed that they do this, taking a wider and higher circle each time, only until they see some familiar object or some object they have passed on the road they have travelled, by which to direct their flight home. When pigeons are let fly from a balloon, they drop down until they can see something of the earth, and then fly round in the same way; only in that case each circle is *lower* than the last."

"But Aunt Esther," said Sybil, "is *this* part of your story? mightn't all that happen to any Carrier pigeons?"

"All that might and does happen to all Carrier pigeons that grow up and have an education; and

without it they are no more expert than any other birds for carrying letters. They must be taken from home repeatedly, increasing the distance every time, until they are thoroughly trained to return from any place, however far off."

"But where is your story, mamma?" said Henry. "I like to hear all this, but I have read it before; and then if dinner time comes and papa, we shall lose the story. I know it begins like all other stories, 'There was once a little boy.'"

"O they don't all begin so," said Sybil.—"Some of them begin, 'There was once a beautiful young lady.'"

"Fairy tales," said Henry.

"This one does begin about a little boy," said Mrs. Rutherford smiling; "and he lived in the corner of a large estate in England. His mother was dead, and his father worked upon the land as a day labourer; and his grandmother kept the lodge at one of the great gates. And at this lodge little Timothy and his sister spent the most of their time; for though now and then they went back to their father's hut for a day or two, it was lonely there, and they were glad to return to the lodge. It was a great amusement to sit and watch the carriages go by, and to run out and open the gate for those who wished to come in or out; and it was pleasanter still to pick up a penny or a halfpenny when one found its way through a gentleman's fingers, and so down to the ground. This did not happen so often as you would suppose, and still little Tim and his sister found their box of pennies was filling up very fast.

"One day there had been few carriages along, and in the afternoon Tim sat down in front of the lodge with his fingers in his mouth, for want of something better to do with them. And casting his eyes about for the same reason, Tim saw at a distance something white down in a clump of bushes. He had some-

thing to do with his feet at least now, for they scampered along in a great hurry till he reached the bushes. And there Tim was greatly delighted, and soon disappointed just as much. Far down in the bushes lay a little white pigeon. It had struggled and struggled till it had worked itself through them, thorny though they were; and now it lay on the ground almost dead, and was fluttering yet, though feebly. There was a little blood on some of the white feathers of one wing, and Tim knew that it must have been wounded by a shot. But he could not reach it. He worked and worked, tugging at the bushes, and sticking the thorns into his fingers, but all to no purpose; and, half-crying, he ran back to the lodge again.

"'O granny, granny, there's a white pigeon in the thorn bushes, and I can't get at it!'

"Little Hetty ran out at once to see the pigeon, and Tim ran with her; while old Mrs. Lucas laid down her knitting, and, pushing her glasses high up on her white cap, followed on more slowly. There was the pigeon, to be sure; and there was a hole big enough to bring him through could they but reach him.

"'Run back for the tongs, Hetty, child,' said the old woman, 'and take care not to fall down.'

"Hetty ran as she was bid, and then came slowly back with the tongs; and when Mrs. Lucas had pulled her glasses down to their proper place again, she carefully pushed the tongs through the little open place in the bushes towards the pigeon.

"'O granny! you'll kill him!' cried Hetty.

"'Yes, you'll kill him!' said Tim, his tears beginning to run down again in the old tracks.

"'Silly things!' said the old woman,—'well then you shall have him roasted for supper.' At which idea Hetty's tears came forth as plentifully as Tim's.

"'O we'd rather have him alive, granny!' she said.

"Mrs. Lucas made no further reply; but went on pushing her tongs in and in till she reached the pigeon, who on his part seemed frightened enough, but he was too weak to flutter much, even if he had been out of the bushes. Then Mrs. Lucas put one foot of the tongs under the hurt wing, so as not to hurt it again; and the other foot of the tongs on the other side of the pigeon, over that wing, to hold it fast. And then she carefully lifted the pigeon up, and walked slowly backwards until she had brought him quite out through the hole, walking over Tim and Hetty, who had been hiding their eyes behind her, and rolling them down on the grass. But if they didn't mind it, she did not.

"'Now where's your basket, children?' she said, as she shortened the tongs and took the bird up.

"'We have no basket,' said Hetty.

"'We didn't bring one,' said Tim.

"'Silly things!' said the old woman again. 'Never go to fetch anything without something to put it in.'

"'I'll carry it in here,' said Hetty, holding out her little check apron.

"'No, you can't,' said Mrs. Lucas. 'I shall have to take it myself in my hand. Run home, run home.'

"'But is it alive?' said Tim and Hetty.

"'Lively enough, I'll warrant you,' said Mrs. Lucas. 'One of its wings is hurt, but I'll cure it.'

"So she took the pigeon home, and put it in a basket, and with good care and feeding the wing got well, and the pigeon was as lively as ever.

"'Now Tim,' said Mrs. Lucas one morning, beginning to tie down the cover of the basket.

"'What are you doing that for, granny?' said Tim and Hetty both at once.

"'Be still and listen,' said Mrs. Lucas. 'Now, Tim,

as I was going to say, do you take this pigeon up to the dove-cote, and ask Mr. Riley if he has lost a nun.'

"'What is a nun?' said Tim, rubbing off the tears which were beginning to start in anticipation of the loss of the pigeon.

"'That pigeon is a nun,' said Mrs. Lucas, 'because its tail and its head and the end of its wings are black, and all the rest is white.'

"'But what must I take it up to Mr. Riley for?' said Tim.

"'Because it belongs to him, dishonest little boy,' said Mrs. Lucas, who had a way of speaking to her grandchildren that sounded very harsh, but didn't mean much.

"'O yes! take it up, Tim,' said Hetty, ''cause if it's his, he must want it.'

"'And now hear,' said Mrs. Lucas. 'Tell him just how you found it, more than three weeks ago, and how I got it out of the bushes; and tell him it has had the best of corn and beans since.'

"'I think I'll go too,' said Hetty. 'May I, granny?'

"'Go where ye like,' said the old woman, 'only not into mischief. I don't want you.'

"So Hetty and Tim set out on their walk, carrying the basket between them. It was easy enough to carry, except, indeed, when the pigeon tried to get out; and then Hetty and Tim set down the basket, and held down the cover with all four of their little hands. It was a beautiful walk through the woods, and over the smooth green grass; and in some places there were deer feeding, and in others the beautiful cows; but the children were rather afraid of them, and liked the trees much better. And when they came to the dove-cote, they would doubtless have wished for a dozen pair of eyes, if such an idea could have entered their heads."

"Why should they wish for so many eyes?" said Chryssa.

"Because there were so many things to see. There were so many pigeon-houses, and more pigeons than they could have counted in a long time, even if they had known how to count. Some flying, and some on the ground, and some on the pigeon-houses, eating and walking about, and putting their pretty heads out of the little pigeon-holes that led to their nests. And there were a great many different kinds. The common pigeons were there, fat and comfortable-looking, with their pretty bobbing heads, and grey and white feathers; and the fantails with their pretty spread of white feathers; the horsemen with their ruffs of feathers; the pouters, walking about with their crops puffed out like a little balloon; the tumblers turning somersets in the air, though on the ground they were quiet little pigeons of particularly pretty colours; and lastly, there were plenty of nuns and carriers.

"Tim and Hetty stood still in the midst of the pigeons, looking about with great delight and wonder, and listening to the soft cooing from so many feathered throats, till Mr. Riley came up to them, and asked what they wanted. Then they showed him the little cured pigeon, and told him how long it had been sick, and how much it had eaten, just as they were bid. And Mr. Riley took the little nun out of the basket, and put it on the ground; and there never was anything prettier than the way it walked about and cooed, and bent its pretty head when it found itself at liberty.

"'I would let you have it to keep,' said Mr. Riley, 'only if you didn't keep it shut up, it would fly back here in a trice; and it's a shame to put such a creature in prison. But I'll give you two little young Carriers that have never been out of the nest, if you can take care of them.'

"'O yes,' Tim and Hetty said, with sparkling eyes, 'they could take care of them.'

"'Well, you shall have them, then,' said Mr. Riley, 'to pay you for being so kind to this other one and bringing it back. And you shall have a bag of barley, too, to pay for his keep.'

"So he took their basket and went off, and presently came back with a little bag in one hand and the basket in the other; and in the basket were two young Carrier pigeons, little soft things, just fledged, and rolling about there against each other. Hetty and Tim were almost out of their wits with joy; and at the same time so much afraid of hurting the pigeons if they walked too fast, that the wonder was how they got home at all.

"'Well! little lazy children,' Mrs. Lucas said when she saw them; 'so you have come home?'

"But she was very much pleased with the bag of barley, and admired the pigeons almost as much as did their little owners. And when Tim's father came there to see them, he was so pleased with their pets that he set to work and made them a pigeon-house; and there the young Carriers lived in great style, and in the course of time grew to be old Carriers, with ever so many young ones of all ages and sizes."

"That isn't all the story, mamma," said Henry, when Mrs. Rutherford ceased speaking.

"That is all the first part; there is a continuation."

"Well continue, won't you, mamma?"

"O please do, Aunt Esther!" said Sybil and Chryssa.

Mrs. Rutherford smiled and went on.

"Several years passed away, and Hetty and Tim were grown bigger, and had been to school, and had learned many things. But the best of all was, they had learned to fear God and keep his commandments;

for so their schoolmistress taught them and set them the example. And as they began to love God more, so did their love grow towards every one else,—towards every living thing—even their own little pigeons. Everything had better and kinder care and attention; and old Mrs. Lucas often said there never was such another boy and girl; and that for her part she couldn't see where they had picked it up."

"I remember that," said Henry, laughing. "Well mamma?"

"And so for a time," said Mrs. Rutherford, "they were as happy as a family could be. But then they began to see that Tim was growing thinner and thinner, and that he was not near so strong as he used to be. Hetty saw it first; and she talked and talked to her father and grandmother till they became frightened and sent for the doctor. But the doctor could do none of them much good,—above all, Tim.

"'Change of air' would be the best thing, he said,—and 'a month at the sea shore,'—or 'a little voyage.' But how was Tim to get either? where was the money to take him? God provided a way. That same Mr. Riley who took care of the dove-cote heard that Tim was ill, and told his master—the gentleman to whom the estate belonged. And he was going to the seaside with his family, and he said that Tim should go too; and that he would pay his expenses. There was great rejoicing in the little lodge at the gate when this news came; and then Hetty fell a weeping and Tim looked very grave. For he thought that maybe he should never come back to see them again; and she saw what he thought. Nevertheless he would try—it would be wrong not to do what he could.

"'I will take a basket of the pigeons, Hetty,' he said, 'and then I can write without paying any postage; and my letters will come very fast. But

the last one in the basket shall stay there as long as I do.'

"And Tim went, and the pigeons; and one after another came back with the letter tied under its wing. But none except the first one said that Tim was any better, or that he was likely to get well; and Hetty began to give up all hope. There was only one pigeon left now,—the others had all come home and were flying about as usual; but Hetty watched for that one till she was almost ill.

"'Silly child!' Mrs. Lucas would say to her, 'what good does it do?'

"'No good, granny—only to me,'—and Hetty would take up her hat and go out to a clear space in front of the lodge, and there sit down and watch the sky.

"At last one afternoon, when it was growing late, and Hetty had almost made up her mind to go in, she saw a little dark speck on the distant blue sky. It came nearer and nearer, and she saw it was the pigeon; and wheeling two or three times about her head it came and perched at her feet. But there was a black ribbon round the bird's neck, and the letter beneath its wing had a black seal; and Hetty knew that her brother had taken a longer flight than the tired pigeon—even to 'the land that is very far off.'"

CHAPTER X.

CHRYSSA'S FOUR VISITS.

"WILL you tell us another story to day, Aunt Esther?" said the children one morning, about a week after the story of the Carrier pigeons.

"It is by no means a rainy day," said Mrs. Rutherford,—"look how the sun shines."

"But Henry has gone away, and we're quite alone," urged Chryssa.

"You needn't be alone. I am going out in grandmamma's carriage to pay visits, and you and Sybil may go with me."

"Then I'll take one of my new books," said Sybil, "and have a pleasant drive."

"You can't read very well when we're driving about, I should think," said Chryssa.

"No, but when you and Aunt Esther—I mean when Aunt Esther and you are in the houses seeing the people,—then I can read."

They all got ready accordingly; and when the carriage came, Sybil took her book and Chryssa her doll, and then went down and jumped in, and the carriage rolled off.

At the first two places where it stopped Mrs. Rutherford left both the children and made her visits alone. But at the third she told them they might come with her. Sybil however chose to stay with her book, but Chryssa got out with her

aunt and went into the house. It was not a very amusing visit—the ladies did not talk of much that she could understand; but when Mrs. Rutherford was coming away the lady of the house kissed Chryssa, and asked her how old she was; and then went to a table at one side of the room and brought back a little ear of wheat, made of sugar, and very pretty, which she said Chryssa might take home to remember her by. So that was something to look at and talk about till the carriage stopped at Mrs. Sutherland's. Here Chryssa went in again.

Miss Sutherland was rather an oldish lady, with a very stylish dress and a very gay voice and manner. She talked very fast too, and rather loud; so that Chryssa could hardly understand what she said. Talking away, first to Mrs. Rutherford and then to Chryssa, and then to both at once, with bows and smiles in plenty,—Miss Sutherland seemed overflowing with satisfaction.

"Now I'm going to give you something," she said to Chryssa, "just for coming so far to see me. See here is a little India basket—how do you like that?"

"Very much, ma'am," said Chryssa, for the basket was small and round, and very pretty.

"But you needn't think I am going to give you all the sugarplums that are in it," said Miss Sutherland,—I must keep them to give to some other little girl, as there won't be any basket for her."

So she emptied out the sugarplums, and Chryssa's satisfaction in having the basket was alloyed only by the fear that Miss Sutherland thought she wanted the contents too.

The next was a very different house. The ladies were all upstairs in the second story; and as Mrs. Rutherford knew them well, she went up there with Chryssa, and saved them the trouble of coming down.

There again Chryssa couldn't understand much

that was said; and she set on a little stool, and felt very tired, till one of the ladies brought out a plate of gingercakes exactly suited to her comprehension. But just as she had raised one to her mouth, it came into Chryssa's head that Sybil was particularly fond of gingercakes, and that doubtless she was very hungry in the carriage. The cake came down from Chryssa's lips directly, and she sat with it in her hand. Then she thought to herself, if the ladies should see it they would ask why she didn't eat it,—and then they would feel as if they must give her another; and so she laid the cake under her handkerchief. But this produced a difficulty which Chryssa had not foreseen. For when Mrs. Haddam began to hand round the cake plate again she saw that Chryssa had none, and came to her first of all. But Chryssa refused.

"Do you like them?" said Mrs. Haddam.

"Yes, ma'am, very much."

"Then why don't you take another?"

Chryssa hesitated a minute and then uncovering her gingercake she said,

"I haven't eaten this yet, ma'am."

"What are you going to do with it, Chryssa?" said Mrs. Rutherford; for she saw that the lady looked a little surprised, and she wished the child to explain herself.

"I wanted to take it to Sybil," said Chryssa, looking towards Mrs. Rutherford with eyes that said she too had noticed Mrs. Haddam's face.

"O well, then, take another for yourself," said the lady; and Chryssa had to take it, though she didn't want to do so.

"How long you have stayed," said Sybil, when they went back to the carriage.

"We've been eating gingercakes," said Chryssa.

"O dear, I wish I had gone too," said Sybil. "I'm as hungry as I can be."

"I brought you one," said Chryssa. "It's only one, but I couldn't bring any more, you know."

"I'm very glad to get one," said Sybil; "and very much obliged to you too."

"Chryssie," said Mrs. Rutherford, "you may always bring home to Sybil anything that is given to yourself, but it is better, dear, just to hold it openly in sight, and let people see what you are doing. I know why you did not in this case, and I liked the feeling; but other people do not know you as well as I do, and might not understand you."

"Did I do anything wrong?" said Chryssa, her eyes taking the same look which Mrs. Haddam had before called forth.

"No, love—not in the least. But when a thing is really right, it may just as well be done in the open daylight."

There was one more visit to pay—to Miss Hall; but Sybil being now fortified with the gingercake preferred her book as before and would not go in.

Miss Hall was another talkative lady,—very cheerful, and pleasant and kind, but with a brisk manner of speech which made Chryssa a little afraid of her. So many of her remarks sounded like "true words spoken in jest," that they seemed to Chryssa like little raps over the knuckles, or little trips, or anything else that was sudden and disagreeable. After talking a while to Mrs. Rutherford she asked Chryssa "what she thought she had got for little folks?" and as Chryssa professed herself unable to guess, Miss Hall went to a pantry and brought out a large China plate. And on the plate were cocoa-nut cakes and various kinds of candy. Most of them Chryssa had seen before; but on the very top, across all the others, lay a broad, flat, and thick piece of sweet composition, very pink and very nice. Now Chryssa had always been taught to take the nearest and uppermost piece of cake or bread from a plate full,

and the same rule seemed to apply to candy. Moreover she wanted to taste the pink stick—but then it was too large to appropriate to herself. All these thoughts passed quickly through her mind as Miss Hall offered her the plate; but trusting that the pink stick could be broken, she laid hold of it with that intent.

"No, no," said Miss Hall, in her brisk manner, and with a smart little toss of her head,—"you needn't think you're going to have all my cinnamon candy—I can't let you, I like it very much myself. But I will break it, and then you can have a piece."

Chryssa would gladly have taken anything or nothing after that, but the plate was carried off, and in due time she received a fragment of the pink cinnamon stick. But whether or no the words had spoiled it, she certainly found the fragment particularly dry and unsatisfactory.

"Aunt Esther," she said, when they were once more wheeling off in the carriage, "don't you think it would be better for me never to take *anything* that they give me when I go with you to make visits?"

Mrs. Rutherford smiled.

"No, Chryssie, I would'nt make such a rule. Little people are expected to take sweet things when they are offered."

"Are they?" said Chryssa.

"What are we stopping here for, Aunt Esther?" said Sybil.

"My shoes."

"O may I get out and ask for them?" said Chryssa.

Mrs. Rutherford said yes, and the steps were let down and Chryssa got out. She walked into the shoe shop, and up to the counter.

"Are Aunt Esther's shoes done?" she said.

"Whose shoes?" said the man.

"O," said Chryssa, "I mean, are Mrs. Rutherford's shoes done?"

They were, and tied up in brown paper, and Chryssa carried them back to the carriage. And the carriage rolled away again towards home.

After tea Miss Emma Clarivaulx came down to see them; and she danced a Russian dance for the children, and sang as well; and then she took out of her pocket a little pack of cards and played all manner of tricks with them. She could tell any card that Sybil and Chryssa chose out of the pack, and then she would make them take just the one that she chose; besides bringing all the cards of one sort together in the middle of the pack, without seeming to do anything but shuffle them. Then she said she would tell their fortunes.

All sorts of things were said to Sybil about her music and her books; and then to Chryssa about her doll and her cat, and finally her teeth—Miss Emma said that Chryssa would lose two teeth before long. Chryssa knew that she ought to lose two—there were two just in the way of new ones that were coming; but she had never been able to make up her mind to go to Dr. Bunker and have them out. Therefore Miss Emma's prediction did not astonish her much. But when the young lady had gone up stairs, and they were all quiet again, there came a knock at the door. And when Mr. Rutherford opened it there stood Dr. Bunker! he had come for the very purpose of taking out those two little teeth.

Chryssa thought it was rather hard to have two taken out at once, and bad enough to have any taken out at all; but when Dr. Bunker had taken the trouble to come there because she was afraid to go to him, she thought she could not say a word.

Only after the first tooth was out Chryssa proposed

waiting till to-morrow for the second; but Dr. Bunker said she had better sit down and have that one out too, and she did.

There was great rejoicing then in Chryssa's heart, and the end of the evening was very pleasant. Especially as Mr. Rutherford let both the children sit up till half-past nine o'clock, and took them down to the supper table; and there Chryssa eat some raw oysters and vinegar, and Sybil regaled herself with a piece of cold partridge.

"Aunt Esther," said Chryssa, when they were going to bed, "wasn't it *very* strange that Miss Emma Clarivaulx should have told in my fortune that I should lose my teeth very soon?"

"It was just about as strange as most of the things that fortune-tellers predict," said Mrs. Rutherford smiling. "She knew Dr. Bunker was coming, Chryssie."

"O did she?" said Chryssa,—"then of course it wasn't strange."

"But do fortune-tellers never really foretell events?" said Sybil,—"I mean things they haven't been told?"

"'There is a God that revealeth secrets,'" said Mrs. Rutherford—"we do not read that other beings have that power, except such as He has entrusted with it for some great purpose."

CHAPTER XI.

TWO OR THREE THINGS.

And so the winter wore away and the spring came; but the children had been so busy with their books and their play, that they were quite surprised when Mrs. Rutherford told them it was the first of March.

"The first of March! why it only wants three months to strawberry time," said Sybil, who was rather given to such calculations,—"and six months to the end of summer."

"And it is only six months since the end of summer, if you calculate that way," said her aunt.

"When shall we go home again?" inquired Chryssa.

"In April or May."

"How pleasant that will be!" said both the children; and then they began to count the days that were left as each one fled away, and Sybil would say to her sister,

"You can *see* that it's spring, Chryssa, only look how blue the sky is; and the grass is getting green in the courtyards."

"Yes, and I saw some crocuses out in one of them," said Chryssa.

For some time now Chryssa had been going up stairs every afternoon to let Miss Clarivaulx paint her picture; but it was not very pleasant work. In the first place, she had to sit perfectly still; that was

well enough; but then she was afraid to smile or speak, and if her foot or her hand were ever so tired she did not like to move it. And worse than all, Mr. James Clarivaulx would talk to her, and try to make her laugh whenever he was in the room.

"How do you like your looks to-day, Chryssa?" he would say. "Aren't you in love with your own picture?"

And it seemed very rude not to speak, and say, "No, sir,"—and yet if she opened her mouth she might not shut it again just right. And if she made no answer all, Mr. James would perhaps come behind her and tickle the back of her neck. Therefore, on the whole, Chryssa was very glad when Miss Clarivaulx told her one afternoon that the picture was almost done, and she should have it to take down with her. But there was more to do than she had counted upon, and the picture was touched and retouched as long as the daylight lasted. Then Chryssa took it in her hand and went down stairs, feeling very glad that nobody else wanted to paint one. She was so tired—she could hardly get down stairs.

But Mr. and Mrs. Rutherford and Sybil became quite excited over the picture, and looked at it and talked about it for a long time; and Mr. Rutherford said he should go out and get a frame for it. So off he went.

"You don't seem to care much about the picture, Chryssie," said Mrs. Rutherford, coming up to her.

"Yes, I like it," said Chryssa.

"What makes you sit over the fire so? are you cold?"

"I cannot think how anybody can be cold this warm day," said Sybil.

"I was a little cold," said Chryssa, "and tired. I feel warmer now."

"Look up at me,' said her aunt

And Chryssa looked up, but her little face was very pale, and her eyes looked dark and heavy.

"How would you like to go to bed?" said Mrs. Rutherford.

"O very much," said Chryssa; but when she got down from her chair her feet were unsteady, and she could hardly walk. Mrs. Rutherford carried her into the next room and put her to bed, and she went to sleep; and then after a while her cheeks began to be very red, and she tossed about in the bed, and talked of all sorts of things without waking.

Sybil had a little bed made for her on the floor that night; and when Chryssa opened her eyes next morning just as the sun rose, there was Mrs. Rutherford sitting by her with the same dress on that she had worn last night. Sybil was standing there too, in her night-gown; and Chryssa heard her say softly,

"Aunt Esther—do you think she's very ill?"

"No, I'm not very ill," said Chryssa, shutting her eyes again. "I'm only a little ill."

"How do you know?" said Sybil.

"Because I know how I feel," said Chryssa. "You'd better get into bed, Sybil, or you'll be ill."

"O I slept in a nice little bed on the floor," said Sybil, throwing herself down on it. And Chryssa tried to sit up and see it, but she was weak and fell back on the pillow. Then Mrs. Rutherford told her to lie quite still, and said she must not talk, and Sybil must not talk to her any more for a while.

Chryssa was right. She was not *very* ill, and still she had to lie in bed for a number of days, and have the doctor, and take medicine. And the shutters must be partly closed, so as to keep out the sunlight; and the door must be shut lest Sybil, or the sound of Sybil's piano, should come in too often. Mrs. Rutherford stayed by her all the time; but then she knew

how to nurse, and could talk to her when she wanted talking, and let her lie quiet when she wanted rest. Mrs. Salisbury came often to see her too, but she seldom stayed a great while, for Chryssa never seemed to wish for a change of nurses. It troubled her when she was so hot with fever, to have the clothes tucked tight down on each side of her neck, and perhaps a blanket pulled up over her. But she never said anything till Mrs. Salisbury was gone, nor then either, indeed; but she would push the clothes out, so that they lay loose about her neck as before, and Mrs. Rutherford would quietly pull down the blanket.

Through the long night, when Chryssa was hot and restless, Mrs. Rutherford would sing to her and bathe her face and hands with vinegar; and Chryssa could hear Sybil say from her little bed on the floor,

"Does she feel any worse?"

And Mrs. Rutherford always answered,

"No, I think not,"—or, "I hope not."

And Chryssa always spoke up and said,

"O no, I feel a great deal better."

In the early morning she could sometimes hear the little sweep going his rounds; and Chryssa used to wonder whether he ever was ill, and who took care of him. But as she began to get better herself she slept more in the mornings, and heard less; and then it was so pleasant to sit up in the bed against the pillows, and have her face washed and her hair brushed before Mr. Rutherford came to see her. Then when breakfast was ready Mrs. Rutherford would go into the parlour, leaving the door open so that Chryssa could see them all at the table; and it was Sybil's great delight to carry in the little cup of weak tea, and the little piece of toast for Chryssa to eat, and to sit on the bed and hold the little waiter with the cup and the plate on it in her lap.

"When you're well enough, Chryssie," said Sybil one morning, "we'll get Aunt Esther to tell us another story. I expect she'll tell us a good many while you're sick."

"O I'm well enough to-day," said Chryssa, biting her piece of toast.

"No you're not," said Sybil. "Aunt Esther says you mustn't be excited till you're quite strong."

"A story wouldn't excite me," said Chryssa,—"it would do me good."

"It wouldn't put you to sleep, I think," said Sybil. "Here—don't you want some tea?"

"But your tea will be cold," said Chryssa, after she had taken one sip.

"I don't care if it is," said Sybil. "I'm in no hurry for breakfast, child."

"But you'd better go now," said Chryssa, "because I've done."

"How pale you look, Chryssie," said Sybil, as she set down the waiter and then came back to see that her sister was nicely covered up. "I wonder when you'll be well enough to get up."

"O soon, I think," said Chryssa, with a little smile.

"It's well you're getting better, any how," said Sybil, as she went off with the waiter.

Chryssa lay very quiet all the morning; but when she had eaten her dinner, and the others were still dining, Sybil came into the room with a bound.

"Here's grandmamma!" she said.

"Why she comes every day," said Chryssa.

"Yes, but where do you think she comes from, and what do you guess she has brought you, Chryssie?"

Chryssa could not guess; but she looked anxiously towards the door till Mrs. Salisbury came in, and then rose up in bed and stretched out her hands with an "Oh!" of wonderful surprise and pleasure. For Mrs. Salisbury had just come from Cleveland, and in

her hand was a large bunch of spring flowers; and for the rest of the day Chryssa hardly needed either food or sleep. As medicine the flowers were unequalled.

They were put on a chair close by the bed, so that Chryssa could touch them with her hand, and when she got up and lay on the sofa for a while the flowers went too. She was never weary of smelling them and turning them round to look and examine, and searching if there might be one unseen flower among the leaves. Very lovely they were, and sweet and spring-like. The daffodils, with their full round yellow faces, looked as if they must have lived upon sunshine; and their narrow green leaves stood up bowing and bending and poking themselves into Chryssa's face when she tried to smell the flowers. The little blue-bells were delicious to look at, with their thickset flowery heads, and the snow-drops stood gracefully alone in the world, and looked very cold. Then there were polyanthus clusters, in warm winter jackets of rich brown and yellow; and delicate striped crocuses, and the pretty narcissus, and an early hyacinth; with sprigs of box and fir and lavender. The room was sweet and cheerful with them, and Chryssa was cheerful too.

"Aunt Esther," she said, after dinner, "I think I feel well enough to hear a story to-day."

"Not content with the story spring has told you?" said Mrs. Rutherford smiling.

"O yes, I'm content," said Chryssa, looking fondly at her flowers, and touching the blue-bells with a gentle finger; "but I think I could enjoy both together."

"Well, so you shall," said Mrs. Rutherford. "Sybil, I suppose you will want to hear too."

"Indeed I do," said Sybil, springing up on the bed. "What is this story going to be, Aunt Esther?"

"It is called, 'The cat who got a situation in a crockery shop.'"

Chryssa put her hands together with a very pleased look, and Sybil gave a little bound on the bed and looked at Chryssa.

"There was once an old woman," began Mrs. Rutherford, "who was so very poor that she could not get food enough for herself and her little boy to eat. They lived on the outskirts of a small village, and she used to get little jobs of washing and cleaning, and Jack, her little son, would run errands or pick up sticks or do anything he could for a penny. And when Jack was very little they did manage to live, though his mother hardly knew how. But as Jack grew, his appetite grew also; and the little loaf which was once enough for both now vanished with great rapidity, and Jack looked about for more. And Mrs. Kip felt that would not do. What would do she hardly knew, for Jack was too young yet to work much at anything. So she turned the matter in her mind a great deal.

"'Jacky,' she said one morning, when she had given over eating that he might have the more, 'how would you like to go and take care of Mr. Mug's cups and saucers?' For Mrs. Kip thought she would put the question in as pleasant a form as she could.

"'Take care of them, mother?' said Jack. 'Why what could I do with Mr. Mug's cups and saucers?'

"'Why you could sweep out the shop,' said his mother, 'and call Mr. Mug when people came to buy crockery and he was absent, and watch that they didn't steal any cups before he came.'

"'No I couldn't, mother,' said Jack, 'because if I went to call Mr. Mug I couldn't see what the people did, and if I watched them he wouldn't come till next morning,—so that's plain.'

"'No more you could,' said his mother, 'but I

think you will find something to do, and you're going there on Monday morning.'

"'To stay for good?' said Jack.

"'Always stay for good wherever you do stay, Jack,' said his mother; but Mr. Mug is going to let you come home every Saturday night to stay here till Monday again.'

"'Then I won't go,' said Jack.

"'Yes you will, Jack,' said Mrs. Kip earnestly. 'Because you'll have plenty to eat and be very happy—and because I want you to go, and the fifth commandment says, "Honour thy father and thy mother."'

"Jack was silent a little at this; though if the truth must be told, his mother's assurance of 'plenty to eat,' had more effect than his fear of the fifth commandment. Yet that had its weight.

"'I have a great deal to say to you, Jack,' said his mother, 'but I can't think of it now,—maybe I shall before Monday.'

"'If you don't, you can tell me next Saturday,' said Jack.

"'Well, I remember one thing,' said his mother—'it's a great deal worse for little boys to disobey, when their mothers can't see them, than when they can.'

"'Why so?' said Jack.

"'I don't quite know myself,' said Mrs. Kip, 'but I think it is.'

"'God sees them always, don't he?' said Jack.

"'Yes,' said his mother thoughtfully, 'I believe He does; only if He ever sees them more at one time than another, Jack, I'm sure it's when nobody else is looking on. So do you remember that, dear.'

"'Why, I'm not going to do the first thing wrong, mother,' said Jack. 'You'll see. Mr. Mug will say he never heard of such a boy.'

"'Well, dear, I hope he will,' said Mrs. Kip, smiling

at him through very tearful eyes. And on the next Monday morning Jack departed.

"It wasn't far that he had to go,—only down one green hill, and through a meadow, and along a bit of dusty road. And as Jack was barefoot, the dust mattered but little. He stopped just before he got to the village, and washed it off in a brook that ran under the road; and then was very careful to walk on all the tufts of grass and stones till his feet were dry, lest he should have mud instead of dust.

"The village was not very large, and Mr. Mug's crockery shop was very small; but the piles of plates and of cups seemed to Jack so immense that it was wonderful to imagine their being ever used up. Mr. Mug was just opening the shop; and his first salutation was to lay his hand on Jack's head, and by dint of hard pressure thereon to bring Jack's face into the air; upon which, having looked as long as he thought best, Mr. Mug released Jack, and said, 'Well!'

"'Well!' said Jack in return.

"'What did you come for?' said Mr. Mug.

"'To take care of your cups and saucers,' said Jack.

"'How will you go to work?' said Mr. Mug, walking into the shop, followed by Jack.

"Jack looked about to see what there was to do; and as the bowls and platters and plates all said the same thing, Jack spoke it out.

"'Dust them, sir?'

"'No such thing,' said Mr. Mug. 'The first time you dust them, I'll dust you.'

"'It was very dusty as I came along,' said Jack, looking at the sleeve of his jacket, as if he thought Mr. Mug's suggestion rather a good one; 'but not so bad as it is in here.'

"'Crockery-ware never wants dusting,' said Mr. Mug solemnly.

"'O!' said Jack.

"'Now you must stay here all day and mind the shop,' said Mr. Mug. 'There's a stool, and there's the door, and this here's the crockery; when a customer comes in, get off your stool, and keep an eye on the crockery, and ring this bell; and don't look at the customer, nor at anything *but* the crockery, till I come. Then you may get on your stool again. You may get up there now.'

"'Please, sir, I haven't had my breakfast,' said Jack.

"'What's become of it?' said Mr. Mug.

"'Please, sir, we eat it all up yesterday,' said Jack. 'We can do no work on Sundays, and so sometimes we have not anything to eat on Mondays.'

"Mr. Mug looked at him very much as if he were a cracked pitcher, or something of that sort, and it was a doubtful case whether he was worth mending; but then he walked away, and forthwith returning and ordering Jack to get on his stool, he provided him with a large bowl of bread and milk, and received in return Jack's heart.

"And Jack sat there and disposed of it leisurely. Not that he did not eat fast at first, for he was very hungry; but the bowl was large, and after the first attack Jack thought he might as well take the good of it a little more at his ease. So between mouthfuls he took a survey of the store. Mr. Mug had gone to his breakfast, and there was nothing to be seen but a great many of his namesakes, with their family connections of every sort and degree. Bowls and pitchers and platters, and mugs and cups and plates, were on the shelves and on the floor,—some yellow, and some brown, and some painted, and many that would have been white but for a thick overcoat of dust. Jack looked at his bowl to see if it came out of the shop, and presently found a pile of bowls to match upon one of the shelves. Here it suddenly

occurred to him what a remarkable thing it would be to knock down that very pile of bowls,—and to follow up the crash with a row of plates and a score or two of pitchers, and how astonished Mr. Mug would be—and his mother how sorry—and what a splendid noise it would make! Jack was so taken up with these bright ideas, that though he remembered to finish his breakfast, he forgot all about Mr. Mug, till that gentleman came and tapped him lightly and good-humouredly on the head, as if his own morning meal had been a satisfactory one.

"Jack found that he had little to do, and plenty to eat,—it was a fine place. He had just to watch the customers, and call Mr. Mug, and carry home a bowl here and a pitcher there as they were ordered. At night he slept in the shop, while Mr. Mug occupied a room that opened into it; but Jack's little bed was spread on the floor, with a long row of white pitchers on one side of him, and a row of yellow earthen pudding-dishes on the other. And there he slept well enough, and dreamed of knocking the bowls down just as he had thought of it in the morning.

"But the next morning, when Jack got up, the first thing he saw was a little white pitcher lying on its side with the handle broke off. And Jack felt dreadfully frightened. He hadn't done it in his sleep—that was certain; for he had dreamed of nothing but bowls,—yellow bowls with a brown stripe,—just such as his bread and milk came in. But how had he broken it? or had he broken it at all? or who had? There he stood looking at the pitcher, when Mr. Mug came; and Jack forthwith explained to him all his doubts and perplexities. Mr. Mug, however, was a good-natured sort of a man, and all he did was to tell Jack to be more careful, and that it would be well for him to eat less supper at night, and then he wouldn't dream and kick about

in his sleep. To eat less breakfast or supper was, however, what Jack could not do. He did not eat all his bread and cheese at dinner, but stowed away a piece in his pocket for the first hungry occasion; but the bread and milk was irresistible. And the next morning there was a broken soap-dish lying on the floor near Jack's feet. In consequence—Mr. Mug said, though Jack couldn't see of what, unless of that soap-dish having been left on the floor while all the others were on the shelf. But however it was, there was something knocked down, or broken, or cracked almost every night; and Jack felt very miserable, and Mr. Mug was very near being angry. He did threaten to get another boy who should be more careful; but Jack's tears, and his great enjoyment for bread and milk, so far pleaded his cause that when Saturday night came Mr. Mug told him to come again on Monday morning, and try for another week before he gave him up."

"You are not going to stop there, Aunt Esther?" said Sybil.

"That isn't all the story?" said Chryssa.

"That is as much as it will do for you to hear at once," said Mrs. Rutherford, smiling, "and I am going to stop there till to-morrow."

CHAPTER XII.

KITTY WHITEFOOT.

The children were lying comfortably in bed next morning when Mrs. Rutherford came in to look over the bureau drawers.

"Aunt Esther," said Sybil, "how came you to call your story 'The *cat* that got a situation in a crockery store?' I think it was the boy who did."

"'Speak not of the day till the sun be set,'" replied Mrs. Rutherford.

"What does that mean?" said Sybil.

"It means that you should not judge of a thing till you know the whole."

"Well, when will the sun be set?" said Sybil.

"The sun usually gets up first," said her aunt.

"O how funny you are!" said Sybil, laughing and jumping out of bed. "But Chryssa mustn't get up —— I don't know but it is fortunate you are ill, after all, Chryssie—just a little; or there's no telling when we should hear the rest of the story."

Mrs. Rutherford smiled, and told Chryssa to lie still and she should hear it after breakfast. Which she did.

"When Jack got home on Saturday night," said Mrs. Rutherford, "he found his mother and a nice little supper all ready and waiting for him. Mrs. Kip having but one mouth to feed all the week, was

quite able to prepare something better than usual for the extra little mouth on Saturday; and for her part she was so taken up with Jack that she wanted no supper. And Jack was very glad to see her, but he wanted his supper nevertheless.

"'Well, how do you get on, Jack?' she said, when Jack's mouth showed some symptoms of being tired. Is Mr. Mug good to you?'

"'Good as he can be,' said Jack. 'So's the bread and milk.'

"'Then you get plenty to eat?'

"'Just as much as I can, and more,' said Jack. 'I meant to have brought you a great deal in my pocket, mother, and I've put something there every day; but I never can find it in the morning.'

"'I suppose you eat it up in the night,' said his mother, smiling.

"'No, I don't,' said Jack,—'not a crumb.'

"'Well,' said Mrs. Kip, 'is it a pleasant place?'

"'First rate!' said Jack—'if the cups and saucers wouldn't get broke.'

"'Wouldn't get broke!' said his mother. 'Why who breaks them?—You?'

"'No, I don't,' said Jack. 'Somebody does.'

"Mrs. Kip asked a great many questions about this curious breakage of cups and saucers, which Jack answered as well as he could, and then she began to wash up her own crockery—thinking very hard all the time.

"'Where did you leave your bread and cheese every day, Jack?' she inquired.

"'In my trowsers pocket,' said Jack; 'and all night they hang on a chair by my bed.'

"'I think I know what breaks the cups and saucers,' said Mrs. Kip.

"'Why who?' said Jack. 'It wasn't me.'

"'No, I know it wasn't,' said his mother, 'but I think I know what it will be. I can stop the break-

ing too. But you must get Mr. Mug to let you stay there one week more, and next Saturday I'll see what I can do for you.'

"So on Monday morning when Jack went back he told Mr. Mug what his mother had said; and Mr. Mug laughed and said he might try. And all that week Jack eat bread and milk and minded the shop just as he had done before; and the pitchers were knocked down just in the same way, and now and then one of them was broken. It was well Mr. Mug had given his promise at the beginning of the week, or Jack might have found himself at home before the middle of it.

"But when Saturday night came, and Jack went home, Mr. Mug told him he would try him for three nights more; and after that, the first time anything was broken he must go home for good. And Jack walked along the road, and up the hill and down the hill, feeling very sober; for he had got very fond of Mr. Mug and of the bread and milk. And he wondered what his mother would do for him, and whether she could do anything.

"Mrs. Kip was sitting out on the doorstep, knitting a white mitten for Jack to wear in the winter.

"'Well, little boy,' she said, 'so you've come at last. How have things gone this week?'

"'Just as bad as ever,' said Jack. 'There's been two cups broke, and a mug; and Mr. Mug says he'll be broke next if I don't stop.'

"'I thought you knew nothing about it,' said Mrs. Kip.

"'No more I do,' said Jack; 'but that's what he says.'

"'Well,' said Mrs. Kip, 'I'll try what I can do—at least I'll try what something else will do. Come into the house, Jack, and I'll show you—since you can't keep the cups safe you must have a companion that can.'

"'O Mr. Mug won't have more than one boy in his shop,' said Jack,—'he says that's one too many.'

"'Never mind Mr. Mug just now,' said his mother, as she led the way into her little cottage; 'you attend to me. Look here——'

"Mrs. Kip went to her closet and brought thence a small basket, over which was laid a piece of old calico.

"'What's that?' said Jack.

"'Something to help you take care of Mr. Mug's dishes,' said his mother; and she set down the basket on the hearth and bade Jack open it.

"Jack took his time about it, however, for he did not feel in the least sure what might be within; therefore he raised one corner of the old calico just a little way and peeped in. It was all dark, but Jack thought he saw something moving about.

"'Take off the cover, little boy,' said his mother. And Jack boldly pulled the piece of calico quite away from the basket. But as he pulled, and as the calico slid along the hearth, out jumped a little black kitten and gave chase; catching the calico with her claws and teeth, frisking off with it, running round after her tail by way of variety, and playing a thousand pranks, to Jack's infinite delight. The kitten was perfectly black, and as shiny as if she had been oiled; but her left fore-foot was perfectly white, and her eyes as green as two gooseberries.

"Jack was so busy watching what the kitten would do, and trying to make her jump over his hand, that he forgot all about the broken crockery; until his mother said,

"'Well, little boy—don't you think Kitty Whitefoot will take good care of Mr. Mug's cups and saucers?'

"'O what a pretty name!' said Jack. 'Kitty Whitefoot. But what can she do, mother?'

"'Why, she can catch the rats and mice,' said his

mother; 'and I believe that when the rats and mice came down after the bread and cheese in your pocket, they knocked down the cups.'

"Jack sat and looked at Kitty Whitefoot for a long time after that, wondering to himself whether she was equal to such great performances; and Kitty Whitefoot ran after her tail.

"'But, mother,' said he at last, 'what'll Kitty Whitefoot have to eat?'

"'Why sometimes she will have mice,' said his mother, 'and when she has not, she must have some of your bread and milk.'

"Before Monday morning came Jack and the kitten were the best possible friends; and when he set out for Mr. Mug's store, Kitty Whitefoot went in the basket. But Mr. Mug shook his head at her. In the first place he didn't believe the rats broke the cups—and if they did, the cat would break just as many,—pretty work she'd make scampering over the shelves! However Jack begged so hard that Kitty Whitefoot might stay, and repeated so often what his mother had said, that Mr. Mug replied,

"'Well—let her out then—we shall see very soon. There'll be fine work on the shelves now!' And so there was, but not just in the way Mr. Mug expected.

"As soon as Jack uncovered the basket Kitty Whitefoot jumped out, looking very wild and frightened; and then with another bound she was up on the shelves, and hid behind a pile of dishes. Jack called and Mr. Mug called, but Kitty did not appear.

"'Well,' said Mr. Mug, 'I can't stand all the morning looking for cats. I'll give you your breakfast, Jack, and then do you get the cat down and send her off. She'd do mischief enough if she stayed on the floor, but to go up on the shelves at that rate at first!—there wouldn't be a whole dish left in a week.'

"So Mr. Mug brought Jack his bread and milk, and repeating, 'Send her away, Jack, as soon as you can catch her,' he went off to his own breakfast.

"Jack sat eating his in a very sorrowful state of mind. In the first place, he was very fond of the kitten, and then if she must be sent away he saw no hope of his staying long himself. If the rats and mice *did* destroy the dishes, it was only Kitty Whitefoot who could destroy them. He wondered what she could be doing up there on the shelves, and why she didn't come down; and as he wondered he heard a little mew, and there up on the shelf were Kitty Whitefoot's green eyes peeping out from behind a pile of yellow earthen bowls.

"'Pussy! pussy!' said Jack. 'Kitty Whitefoot.'

"'Mew!' said Kitty Whitefoot, switching her tail about and curling it round a teacup.

"'Come down!' said Jack. In answer to which Kitty Whitefoot rubbed her head against the bowls and purred. Then Jack recollected that if she did come down he should have to send her away, and so he said very softly,

"'Stay there, Kitty Whitefoot!' and got another little mew by way of answer.

"'Now we'll have the cat down,' said Mr. Mug when he came in from breakfast. But as if Kitty Whitefoot had understood him she straightway jumped up to a higher shelf, and from that to another, till she reached the top one of all; where she sat and looked over the edge at Mr. Mug and Jack with the utmost complacency, and was doubtless purring—though they were too far off to hear. Mr. Mug brought a step ladder and a broom and a walking-stick, but got no nearer to Kitty Whitefoot for them all. They could see her black tail disappearing behind a pile of dishes, but when the pile was removed she was not there; and the chase went on till Mr. Mug was tired. He couldn't throw anything at

her, or he should break, as he said, 'more dishes than her neck was worth,'—all he could do was to give it up for the present, and repeat his charge to Jack to catch her upon the first opportunity. But the opportunity did not come that day. Kitty Whitefoot made a most particular personal inspection of all the shelves and all the dishes, and then curled herself up in a pudding-dish and went to sleep; but she paid no visit to the floor, and only mewed a little when Jack spoke to her. But when night came, and Mr. Mug had gone to bed, and Jack was stretched on the floor, then did Kitty Whitefoot descend and examine all the dishes and shelves that she had looked down upon through the day. Jack heard her jumping about in the dark, and sometimes purring quite close to his ear, but though he once touched the tip of her tail, that was all. And Jack slept very quietly through the night; but when he woke up in the morning Kitty Whitefoot was up on a high shelf as before, winking and looking down at him with green eyes.

"There were no broken dishes, however—Jack looked, and Mr. Mug looked, but there were none even turned over; and Jack eat his breakfast in quite good spirits. What Kitty Whitefoot eat was a mystery,—she never came down—she never mewed as if she was hungry,—if she mewed at all it was in a kind of sociable way, as if she felt lonely up there on the shelves. It was a curious thing to see her walking round among the dishes, her long black tail curling about and her eyes shining down from behind bowls and pitchers; but she never broke one, and from that time there were no more broken dishes in Mr. Mug's store. Neither was Jack's bread and cheese ever again stolen from his pocket at night. Moreover a dead rat was on more than one occasion killed on the floor of a morning—or maybe half a mouse,—as if Kitty Whitefoot had found more than

she could eat; and Mr. Mug declared she was the best cat that could be. Jack was in high favour now, and every Saturday night when he went home he was so full of Kitty's praises that he almost forgot to take out of his pocket the week's wages that were there wrapped up in paper. And Mr. Mug and the crockery shop flourished exceedingly, and so did Jack and Kitty Whitefoot."

"Is that all?" said Chryssa.

"That is all of the story."

"Haven't you got anything else to tell us, Aunt Esther?" said Sybil.

"Yes, I have got something else to tell you," said her aunt smiling,—"a piece of news—your uncle says that next week, if Chryssa is well, we shall go back to Rose Hill."

THE END.

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